

Eileen

BY W. L. George

"It Surely Would Spoil Her," Said Mrs. Delabole. "You Wouldn't Put a Bunch of Daisies Into a Vase of Gold, Would You?"

LUNCH was ending at Rose cottage. The heat of this summer afternoon, the heavy scent of flowering hay laid upon Peter Walford a pleasant languor. He had eaten enough. He watched the course of a bee which had entered the dining room and now widely circled, distracted and uncomprehending, mysteriously confined by the walls. Mr. and Mrs. Delabole, his hosts, were silent, as if they respected the hush. Or perhaps they had come to a time of life where peace yields joys that earlier years obtain from activity. They were old, both of them, he just 70, his wife a year or two younger; they sat now, neat and cool, with their thin faces the color of fossil ivory, soft-eyed, delicate-handed old people of lace.

"Do you know," said Walford, suddenly turning to Mrs. Delabole, "I love being here?"

"We love to have you, Peter," said the old lady, smiling. A blush of pleasure rose for a moment into her cheeks, that were like the crumpled petal of a faded tea rose.

"I love being here," repeated Walford. "In town there's hurry, noise, assertion. But all the time one wonders whether one makes a noise to convince oneself that one's alive. Here, in the country, one doesn't need to assert. Life is real. Slowly the cattle go by to feed, heads lowered to the grass in the ditches. The day passes; night falls; slowly the cattle come home. Mrs. Delabole, you endure forever in a world without change."

"Without change," cried the old lady petulantly. "I don't say that Burleigh Abbas is a giddy village. But things do happen. There's—well, lots of things happen."

"For instance?" asked Walford, maliciously, as he split a peach.

"Why Peter? You haven't noticed. We've got a new maid." The two men laughed together, and Mrs. Delabole looked offended.

"Don't be cross, Chloe," said her husband. "I know she's a pet, but—"

"She is a pet," said Mrs. Delabole, firmly. "Do you mean to say that you haven't noticed her, Peter? She's so pretty, and only 16. She's been with us two months now, and it's as if she was the little girl I never had. She's like a brown thrush fallen from the nest, all soft and shy, with the dearest eyes, though one doesn't see them often because she's too shy."

"I can't help wishing they'd taught her how to black boots," said Mr. Delabole.

"Don't be brutal, Alan. Eileen's a darling."

"I know. She was not born to black, immortal bird."

"Well," said Walford, "I'm anxious to see your paragon. You know how susceptible I am to feminine charms. And I do my boots myself."

At this moment the door opened and Eileen slowly came in, carrying coffee upon a tray. Nothing was said. The girl must have been conscious of the silence, for as she went round, holding out the tray, she blushed. Walford considered her with a sort of cynical amusement. He appreciated the fact that she had made an entrance just when attention was concentrated upon her. By Jove, the old people were right. Eileen was pretty in a way that village girls aren't pretty. She had none of the color, the buxom health that makes a village belle.

As she stood by Mr. Delabole, holding out the tray with immense awkwardness, as if its weight were enormous, he took in the details of her, the dark hair fluffed out by its fitness, and upon which, as she moved, a reddish shadow seemed to flit. The skin was not white, but almost pure waxen yellow, which imperceptibly at the cheeks changed to a healthy color. There was no movement in the features, except that the small and excessively red mouth was compressed, as if she was making an effort.

When she came to him he noticed first the amazing redness of her hands and wrists, the almost calculated awkwardness of the way in which she held the tray with both thumbs rigid and erect. But he looked up sideways, for he wanted to see her eyes; only the lashes were downcast, and made upon her cheeks two crescents of blurred shadow.

She went out, treading gently. Peter Walford grew conscious of the simplicity, the childishness of these old people. So, very lightly, as if to shock them, he said:

"She's perfectly charming. All she wants is a brown taffeta frock with short sleeves and pauters to the skirt. Trimming, I think, old gold. And, for the evening, just a strip of black silk with big yellow pods, and a bright blue and yellow turban. Yes, I think I'll marry her and get her the clothes."

fundity of his pleasures and ignored the value of his griefs; he thought that nothing lasted, but that things were worth beginning all the same. He wrote a little, and hoped nothing of posterity; he played golf, but knew the limits of his handicap. He had once said that the best sensation of the day was the first mouthful of eggs and bacon.

Next morning as he went about the house he could hear Eileen upstairs, making the beds. He couldn't go up and help her. He found himself vaguely exasperated, as he always was when some wish formed by his languid and disillusioned mind could not be satisfied.

It was 11 o'clock before he saw Eileen cross the kitchen garden and go into the kitchen. Smiling at himself he thought, "Now's the time." So, hands in pockets, Peter Walford went to the back door. It stuck, and as he wrenched at the handle and nearly fell into the kitchen, his opportunity was made, for Eileen turned round, staring, then looked away. He was irritated. He would force her to confront him. "Sorry," he said, "to burst in like this. What's the matter with this lock?"

"It sticks, sir." She was looking at him now, the red mouth a little open. And as she turned aside again, he saw, with a little thrill of semi-hostile satisfaction, a hot blush run over the girl's neck.

"Well," thought Walford, a little later, "you've seen her eyes, and how much forrader are you, my dear fellow? But, by Jove, they were pretty eyes!" A very bright brown, brown with a red light in them. Coffee-colored eyes. Just for a moment they'd come up behind a black veil of lashes.

As he went along slowly, swishing with his stick at tall clumps of nettles, he was thinking how right he'd been about brown taffeta with touches of gold. And there was a lot to be done with bright blues. By Jove, she only wanted a little arranging, and she's made no end of a sensation. Walford stopped suddenly upon the path, stabbing at a rat. Absurd, of course. Still—it would be rather fun. He said aloud, "Why not?" The folds on either side of his mouth grew deeper. People would think he'd gone mad; they'd buzz like a hive; they'd rush round tea parties asking each other, did they know that Peter Walford, etc.? He enjoyed these ideas immensely, being one of those men who like to play tricks on society. A trick in taffeta!

In the early afternoon Walford addressed his hosts:

"By the way, I'm going to marry Eileen."

They both stared at him, and Mr. Delabole laughed. But Mrs. Delabole had caught in Walford's tone something real, which disquieted her. Still she tried to be light:

"How awfully nice for you, Peter, but we've told you she can't black boots."

"For her sake," said Peter, "I will wear patent leather. You know, I'm perfectly serious. I'm going to marry Eileen."

"My dear fellow," said Mr. Delabole, "don't be absurd."

"Why are you so surprised? Don't you think she's charming? Mrs. Delabole, didn't you say she was a pet?"

"Of course," said the old lady, in an acid tone, "but I didn't mean it like that."

"It can't help that," said Peter. "It's you who pointed her charms out to me, so it's your fault."

"Well!"

"But I'm not reproaching you, so don't reproach me. Now, I know what you're going to say; you're going to say that a Walford, whatever that may be, can't marry a girl like that just because he's born to Cambridge, and she's a gardener's daughter. Everybody'll be saying that. She'll be frightened of her servants; when people call on her she won't dare to open her mouth; when she has to do the household she'll order boiled bacon every day. Oh, it will be lovely."

Mrs. Delabole jumped up. "Don't, do let's talk of something else."

"We will if you like, but I'm going to marry her all the same. Oh, don't you worry. In six months she'll have pale hands, and I'll love them; she'll have her hair scragged off her forehead unless I have her bobbed. Bobbed! Yes! Manicured to the point of agony. Shoes three sizes smaller than her present ones, and a size smaller than her feet. And taffeta. Some are born for the purple. Eileen is born for taffeta."

The old people did not reply. Without surprise, Peter Walford found himself involved in a courtship filled with cynical comedy. That day he spoke twice to Eileen. The first time she answered, "I don't know, sir." The second time, when he commented upon the heat, she flung him a shy glance, blushed and almost ran away. "It's like hunting a fawn," he thought. She did not understand. She thought him a nice, civil gentleman. If only he wouldn't look at her like that.

As that evening she sat down in her room with a worn copy of "The Woman Thou Gavest Me," she felt unaccountably worried. She could not understand that she was disturbed by the purposefulness of Walford's gaze; she knew only that she felt very young and small, and that she wanted to talk to her mother. Only it wasn't her evening out. She cried a little as she went to bed, and immediately after went to sleep, being a healthy young animal in whom the body soon prevailed over the spirit.

It was not until next day that Walford aroused in her more precise emotions; in the afternoon he had the audacity to enter the kitchen, where Eileen was alone, peeling apples. He leaned against the dresser and said: "You'll have no apples left if you take the peel off so thick."

She did not reply. Her heart was beating with fear, like that of a wounded bird in a man's hand. No wonder she was slicing the peel off so thickly.

"Let me show you," said Walford. With slow, deliberate movements he picked up an apple and took the knife from the little red hand, that first stiffened and suddenly relaxed as his fingers brushed hers. He peeled the apple perfectly, and held it out for her, expecting

her to smile. "Well," he said, "what do you think of that?" A sunbeam powdered with dust was falling upon her hair, making it golden.

"It's very nice, sir," she replied, in little more than a whisper. She was very frightened. He pleased her, this easy mannered man with the queer smile, though she had an idea he was making a fool of her. But he disquieted her all the same, and she liked him, but she did wish he'd go away. Suppose Mrs. Delabole came in! What would she say?

Three days later events took their definition. Walford had found out in conversation that Friday was Eileen's evening out. She had a great deal to say to her mother, and she did not know whether she would dare say it. It seemed so silly. After all, he hadn't said anything, or done anything. Only . . . She was wearing a green coat and skirt that had belonged to Mrs. Delabole. It was the worst possible shade she could wear. She had enhanced the effect with a black straw hat garlanded with a large number of roses, one of which hung on a broken wire and swung from the back of the brim. Her little hands on the horn handle of an umbrella glowed purplish!

She'd tell Mrs. Stone. She felt excited and reassured! She'd know. But what should she say? Then, just as she jumped over a stile she stopped, for a figure in brown rose from the shelter of the hedge and came towards her.

"Hallo!" said Walford. "May I go with you a little way?" She stared at him, and her gaze was so strained that her eyelids took on a new shape. "What's the matter?" he said. "You aren't frightened, are you?"

"No, sir."

"Well, then! Where are you going to?"

"I'm going to see my mother, sir."

"Where does she live? In Burleigh Abbas?"

"Just the other side, sir," whispered Eileen.

"All right. I'll go along with you and keep the tracks off." She did not reply, and they walked side by side. She went faster than before.

"Why are you hurrying?" asked Walford. "You've lots of time before you. One might think you were going to your young man, instead of to your mother. Haven't you got a young man?" She did not reply. "Don't be shy. I'm sure you haven't—even though you may have one soon."

Still she said nothing, but when they reached the end of the field she seemed to make a great effort. She paused, one hand upon the stile, and said:

"If you don't mind, sir, I'd rather go on alone."

"Why? Don't you like me?"

"It isn't that, sir. Only if people see us together in the village they'll talk."

"Let them talk," said Walford, delighting in the idea of the gossip. He vaulted the stile and held out his hand. "Come. I'll help you over."

After a moment's hesitation she climbed the stile. She paused upon it for a second, and her distraction expressed itself.

"Oh, sir, . . . you see, sir, you're a gentleman . . ."

"That's all right," said Walford, comfortably. "Give me your hand," and enclosed within his little hot fingers. She jumped down from the stile and tried to draw her hand away, but Walford held it. "What's the matter? Don't be frightened. Why, you're trembling."

"Please let me go, sir."

"No, I'm not going to let you go." He seized her other hand. "I'm never going to let you go."

"Please, sir."

"Don't be afraid. You think I'm a rotter, don't you? But I'm not. I'm going to marry you."

Never had she flushed so prettily. She looked away, and he heard an almost angry murmur.

"Sir, don't make game of me." But the murmur was stifled as suddenly he drew her into his arms and, though she averted her face, pressed kisses upon her cheek and neck. She did not resist. She was too shaken and frightened. She did not resist even when Walford drew her face around and kissed her lips.

"Now," he said, "are you going to marry me?"

She hesitated, then snatched her hands away and ran across the field. Smiling, he watched her and told himself that this was enough for the day.

"Kissed you, did he?" said Mrs. Stone, her big brown arms akimbo. "Tell him to keep off. You don't want a gentleman hanging around you. Perhaps it's only his silliness, but maybe he means you no good."

Eileen raised a tear-stained face. "He wants to marry me, mother."

Mrs. Stone flung herself back with a sort of mellow merriment. "My!" she said, "he must be soft!"

Eileen dried her eyes. She was rather offended by this laughter. She might think herself unworthy, but she did not care to have her mother agree. "Now, don't be silly," said Mrs. Stone. "They don't marry girls like you. They say that sometimes, but it's best not to listen."

They quarreled that afternoon. Before supper she met by appointment her old playfellow, Alfred. He was the village postman, a supernumerary of 19, with whom she always felt a woman of the world because he was shyer still than she. She was out of temper with him that afternoon. What a dummy he was! Then she reproached herself. "Oh, why was she such a silly?" Much to Alfred's amusement, she kissed him without being asked to.

Two days later Mrs. Stone was told by Eileen that Mr. Walford had been going on something simply awful. She knew all about Mr. Walford; she knew that he was rich, and that he could pick among dozens of girls of his own kind; he was a gentleman, yes, but the peasant strain in Mrs. Stone whispered to her cannily that gentlemen were, after all, only men; that all men were fools. She summarized this by, "You never know." Finding Mrs. Delabole alone, she slowly brought the old lady to the question, and was not surprised to find her agitated and hurt.

"Is he an honorable gentleman?" asked Mrs. Stone at last.

Mrs. Delabole looked offended: "You need not worry about that. We may think it funny. . . . I don't mean that Eileen's a sweet girl, but still, you know what I mean." She grew confused. "But we need not bother about that. If he says he wants to marry her, he'll do it, if Eileen's willing."

Mrs. Stone, after a moment, replied: "I see, ma'am. Thank you very much, ma'am. I think Eileen will be willing."

So Walford played King Cophetua as he might have played Puck, with an Eileen now less bashful, though still incredulous. Now and then, as she washed the dishes, she pictured herself as a real lady. Perhaps she could have a bed-spread of pink satin. She was the prey of excitements, when it all felt like nonsense. The silence of Mr. and Mrs. Delabole, the coldness of the cook, afforded Walford opportunities to pursue her, to surprise her alone, to compel her to accept caresses which she wanted to resist and to return, and to try to force from her expressions of regard which Eileen would have liked to have given him if she had only known the words.

On the Sunday morning which preceded the announced date of Walford's return to London, Eileen, disturbed and miserable, went to church. She'd always liked church. It was so nice and quiet. And she loved joining in the hymns, because her voice was hidden by that of other people, and so she didn't feel shy. But that day she drew no benefit from the service. She joined mechanically in the kneeling and rising, but all the time she was aware of Peter's eyes upon her.

When Eileen had to get up and go out, she knew that he would speak to her before everybody. It would be dreadful. It was more than dreadful, for Walford, without hesitation, took the shrinking arm and led her on. She wriggled her arm.

"Oh, sir," she said, "you mustn't do that before everybody."

"Why not? We're going to be married in a fortnight. I've applied for the license."

"Oh, sir," said Eileen, and no longer wriggled her arm, but with flushed cheeks bent her head as the congregation curiously watched them walk away. As they went up towards the down on the other side of the railway, she was all confused emotion, through which threaded a preoccupation: she had to lay the table for lunch.

They went on beyond Burleigh Abbas, past a hanger grown hill, along a rutted path where the leaves of last autumn still lay, a dim glow flung on their darkness by the sun that rode high. Peter Walford told himself:

"I must get her a frock like those leaves, sort of smoke gold. By Jove! What fun!"

They reached a small birch wood, where the trunks were festooned with silver bark like toy trees. In the strong grass pink campion held up its rosy stars, and blue speedwell, yellow-eyed, ran along the ditch, brilliant and shy. The air was so soft and scented that for a moment he felt himself sincere. He took her into his arms and she did not resist him. She bent the dark head upon which ran that fleeing red shadow that the sun brought out. After all, it might be true.

Three months elapsed before Eileen asked herself whether she was happy, and decided that she was. Her life still seemed extraordinary; this house near Hyde Park, with the clean white face, the green painted railings and balconies, seemed very wonderful; the bathroom, too, and the strange new habit of bathing every day. The parlor, Oh, she must remember to call it the drawing room, it seemed wrong somehow to sit in it except on Sunday.

Eileen never knew what she wanted for lunch. The first time she said chops, the second time steak, until at last the cook took the initiative, which was pleasant, and made Eileen feel guilty. Only she was so afraid of quarreling with the cook. What astonished her most was the sight of her own hands, where the crimson had now faded into rose. She seemed to have grown a new kind of finger nail, too. How nice they looked. If only Peter wouldn't insist upon those very short sleeves. He said she had nice arms, but she did feel she didn't ought to show them except to him. There! She knew she mustn't say didn't ought to. Dra! She mustn't say dra!

As Eileen sat at the little Queen Anne bureau before stationary which she hardly dared to use, she was perhaps not quite happy. Her rise in the world affected her mind as mountain climbing does the body. Still she must trust Peter, must believe in him, even when he said he loved her, which seemed a queer thing for him to do. Why should he?

It was characteristic of Eileen that she felt for her husband more admiration than love. She was never quite comfortable with him, partly because he was too magnificent, and partly because she seemed to provide him with a private joke which she could not understand. She did wish he wouldn't dress her up so. They were quite lovely, of course, but these London girls did wear such short skirts, the bold, brazen hues. And her skirts were shorter than anybody's. What was she to do? She couldn't say she wouldn't go. And why whenever he took her to see people in enormous houses in Kensington, old ladies in black silk, did he choose that day to make her wear orange cobwebs, things that showed her ribbons. They didn't like it at all; she knew that. Why did Peter do it?

Eileen often resumed that discussion. But she never obtained any solution. Sometimes she wondered why Peter took her to these dull places. Also he was very fond of classical concerts on Sunday afternoon. She supposed it was all right, being without a hat with a little tarsi of tortoise shell surmounted with rubies, but she looked different from other people. Why did Peter make her do that at an oratorio when she didn't do it at a music hall? Still, she supposed Peter knew.

Peter Walford was enjoying himself more than ever before. He had not made too great a sacrifice, for he discovered that his prank had yielded him an exquisite wife. He had been right in his estimate of her esthetic possibilities; she flattered his taste so much that often in her arms he found an emotion born less of love than vanity. She had been a great success, a success of oddity, of course, which wouldn't last. But still, nothing lasted and, meanwhile, it was fun to take her about, to show the world that the Russian ballet had not been invented for nothing, to travel through life in a sort of bush of irony.

He even amused himself by getting hold of a letter of hers, which contained all the common errors of spelling and a large number invented by herself. This he passed round a tea party, enjoying the confusion of the Kensingtonians and telling himself: "It's funny being rich enough to make them read a letter when cat is split with a K, and to make them say: 'How fresh! How naive!'"

In Bohemia his pleasure was of a different kind. It was a pleasure of excitement. He had done the thing they all talked of; he had surprised them because he was a man who had never before talked of the thing he had done. So he had the delight of producing Eileen as a sort of eastern idol, sheathed in a few yards of champagne crepe de chine, with her hair dressed rather like that of a Fiji islander, covered with a resille of threaded jade, her slim arms and ever her silk-clad ankles shackled with crowded bangles of gold, ebony, silver, incrustated gems, painted wood, knitted silk, and leather of every shade and shape.

She was excessive and the women stared at her with a sort of hatred and envy.

He took delight in these Chelsea parties, because Eileen carried his esthetic lunacy with a shy, open-eyed charm, and looked down upon her ornaments with surprise, as if she did not recognize herself. She was, Peter told himself, darty butter served up in a bowl of chrysoprane, to be eaten with a spoon of tourmaline. She did not mind. She was lost. And in a way she was grateful.

She was not far off 16, a country child in fancy dress, living a life in fancy dress. She understood so little what she was doing that she did not realize that she attracted some of the men she met. She liked some of them, but not all. She was rather frightened of the fat men choking in their collars, and especially of the old ones who took her hand to look at her rings.

So first one year then another passed. She was a little surer of herself. She could answer when she was spoken to, but her answers never seemed to lead to much more. She was not quite so frightened of her servants, who had become her friends, indeed the nicest people she knew. If only life hadn't gone so fast as a film it would have been easier to manage. She had only one sorrow: That she was not allowed to see her mother and sister. Sometimes now she had a day dream which inverted the old day dream of the pink satin bed-spread. As she brushed her hair at night she liked to think of Burleigh Abbas, preferably on a blue, misty day, with veils of cool muslin-like long fingers drooping from the fir trees. Of her mother's kitchen, of their old cross-bred collies, scratching comfortably by the black-leaded range. Well, it couldn't ever be. It couldn't be helped and, after all, perhaps she didn't mind. Things were like that, and she supposed they were for the best.

perhaps the service that ties the empty hour.

She was little over 19, and in these growing moods of aloofness began to think more and more of familiar things. She enjoyed the letters from her mother, though they told her very little. Her sister Jane was getting married to the young man at the general shop; her friend Hilda had been reproved by the vicar for playing ball with the boys on Sunday afternoon. "She didn't oughter," reflected Eileen, thinking in the vernacular.

Sometimes, when she was very miserable, she brought out those collected letters and read them all. She thought of the past more than of the present, as if she were old; her husband, she did not know why, seemed worried, too.

Almost another year passed away in these broodings, and it was only then, in the spring, when Eileen felt moving within her an impulse toward ease, that suddenly she told herself:

"I want to go home. Not to stay, of course, but just to go home for a day."

She saw herself tiptoeing to her mother's window, taking just one look at the kitchen, and going away, as if afraid to be caught. Well, there was nothing to stop her; it was Saturday night, and Peter had gone away somewhere for the week-end. Why not? She slept little, and wondered what clothes to wear.

Then she rose early, told the maid that she was going out for the day, and reached Burleigh Abbas just about 10. She stood for a moment outside the station, hardly liking to go farther. It didn't seem to have changed much in three years. Still the same old milk churns on the platform and Mr. Brown's quince tree again just covered with white blossoms. Eileen had a sense of a return to eternal simplicity. No, she was wrong: there was a new porter at the station. Things did change. "Well," she thought, "such is life." Sighing a little, she went along the road, which was soft and white with piled dust, recognizing with gladness and sorrow the sweep of a hedge, a worm-eaten stile, a gate with a broken hinge.

At last she reached her mother's cottage, and now she could no longer hesitate; she felt afraid to stand aside from the old life. It was easy to rush into it, to run through the front garden where the spring cabbage was coming up nicely, into the cottage, where her amazed mother held her off, instinctively wiping her hands upon her apron before she embraced her.

"Well, I never!" said Mrs. Stone. "Fancy coming down like that, without writing. We might have been out."

Eileen smiled, but could not express even to herself that it was impossible for Mrs. Stone to be out. Where could she have gone to? So she answered questions. Yes, she was very happy. Peter was very nice. No, they'd had no trouble with the cook. How much did this coat and skirt cost? She didn't know; Peter paid all the bills. Twenty pounds, perhaps; perhaps more.

"My!" said Mrs. Stone. Then an idea came to her: "Does Mr. Walford know you're here?"

"No, ma."

"Do you mean to say you've come without him knowing? He wouldn't like it."

"Oh, ma," said Eileen, suddenly tearful. "I had a fancy. Don't be hard on me. Oh, here's Jane." Indeed Jane was coming up the path, followed by an awkward fellow with red hair. "Lor!" cried Eileen, "that's Bert. He looks just the same."

"They're going to be married," said Mrs. Stone. "You ain't the only one who's settling down."

It was very awkward in the kitchen, for the young man from whom she had so often bought pins stood at the door and refused to come in, but leaned upon the lintel, lifting with great regularity first his right foot, then his left, while Jane, after carefully kissing her sister, looked at her clothes with a certain animosity. After an hour the conversation collapsed for lack of questions, and there was nobody about whom Eileen could ask another.

She realized that these people no longer were hers, that her life had been turned away like a stream that is suddenly dammed. So it was with a sense of escape that suddenly she said: "Ma, I think I'll go to church."

Mrs. Stone and the others thought this rather rude of Eileen; they were all very uncomfortable, but thought it manners to continue in this state all day. Only, what could one say to such a proper sentiment? After a moment Mrs. Stone announced that she couldn't go because she had to watch the joint.

"Thanks to you, my girl," she said, "we have a joint every Sunday." So Eileen, by the side of Jane, and followed by the red-haired young man, who refused to walk with them, went on toward the church. When Eileen reached her pew she hoped church would reunite them. She looked curiously about at the pitch-pine pews, terminated by lumps of wood cut into treflols. The old familiar smell of incense and varnish, the lectern, looking as if it had not been polished since she left. My! It brought one back! She followed the service with greater difficulty than in the old days, for she had not been to church since she was married; also, she was covertly looking about, identifying people, then looking down, realizing that everybody was staring at the fine lady and incredulously recognizing her.

As she had to rise for the hymn her two small gloved hands clenched upon the edge of the pew. She wondered if she were going mad, for, on the left side, not far away, she saw Peter. Just where he'd sat before! The same old Peter, but somewhat different, pale and worried. Perhaps it was the funny light in the church. What was he doing here? He saw her now, and did not smile at her. His eyes were as surprised as hers. She was disturbed and now grew terrified. Peter would know that she'd come, and he'd forbidden her to. Oh, what should

she do?

With this came a change in her husband's attitude. He could not understand her new absorbed moods; formerly, when she had looked up at him, it had always been with an incredulous smile and a downward droop of the long lashes; now she looked up at him doubtfully, afraid as well as puzzled. Shyness was giving place to a mood that looked like sulks. So she stimulated his irony less, and he tended to use her more. He sent her out to buy him a book. She began to mend his clothes.

Once more she was serving, but now it was not the service of incredulous and exalted love, but the service of duty, or