

low that milked the cows for me last summer? He was an author. Went broke, and I kept him—for his work wasn't worth his board alone, much less his pay—I kept him all summer. He told me a thing or two. There isn't money in it, and it's all a swindle anyway. Suppose you do sell some magazine a story? That doesn't bring in the bread and butter regularly. Of course, you wouldn't need that, but don't you see, dear, one has to be practical? Now you can do all the writing you want as my wife, and I mean to give you a pretty easy time—only you mustn't get unpractical, Clarice." He lowered his voice. "You know, dear, I always think a woman's task is to keep her house neat and look after her babies."

Clarice was eminently practical, only not in the same way as Jim. That night she faced the problem with her own frankness. If she could never share those hopes with Jim—and she knew that she could not—she resolved that they should never come between them. She would abandon them. She would take up the part of wife and mother. She would live for Jim. She would be everything to him.

And, once the decision was made, it was astonishing how quickly she forgot all about her novel.

She had signed it with a pen name. She had given no address. To her it seemed a terrible undertaking, something that was liable to call down on her the scathing ridicule of the publishers, if they knew who she was. No doubt, she thought, the novel would find its way quietly into the waste-basket, and that would be the end of it.

It seemed a foolish little dream of the past six months later, when she was established as Jim's wife in his home. Jim was everything to her. He even tried—she could see that—to interest himself in literature. It was so dear of him! And his delight when she whispered to him the momentous secret made her cry for happiness.

There would soon be three of them—a little world of three! How weak and vain the old dreams had been!

He brought her home some books. "There!" he said, laying them down. "Here's 'Ebenezer's Folly.' They say it's the talk of the country nowadays. We'll read it together. And here's 'When We Were Young.' Everybody's raving over that, the book-fellow told me in the shop. Why, dear, are you feeling sick?"

"No, its nothing, Jim," answered Clarice. There, before her, lay her own book. She opened it. It was hers, word for word and she had written it. Giddily she flew upstairs and thrust it deep into a drawer.

That evening she turned almost automatically to an inside page of the city weekly. She had never read the "Authors' Gossip" before. And there, on the top of the page, in huge headlines, was the question:

"Who is the Author of 'When We Were Young'?"

"The Publishers' Statement."

Clarice devoured the long article that followed. The publishers announced that they had received the manuscript, written in longhand, and apparently the work of an amateur, six months before. A cursory survey had revealed a novel of an uncommon type. It had been read with an enthusiasm that even the most hardened reader in the firm was not proof against. Its setting of country life, its truth, its fidelity, its scorn of the picturesque had demanded instant publication. And the reading public had endorsed it by purchasing ninety-thousand copies of it. But who was the author? The publishers' statement that they did not know was believed to be genuine. It was no advertising scheme. Somewhere in America a genius lay hidden, watching with amusement the frantic efforts of the public to discover her identity—for of course it was a woman!

Clarice let the paper fall. She had not the dimmest idea of the value of