Where MacGregor Sits.

"Nevertheless I don't like his eyes," said Mrs. MacGregor weakly, pushing back her chair as a decisive ending to all argument.

"How perfectly absurd!" objected her husband with a half-amused, half-pitying smile. "How unreasonable women are!"

Young Benedick MacGregor had been married three years. During that time his wife had learned the absolute hopelessness of discussion with him. He was one of those people who so thoroughly believe in themselves and their opinions that any opposing argument merely calls forth a benevolent smile, a pitying shake of the head, and an unspoken "Ah, my dear, your ignorance must be content to be guided by my knowledge of the world." Constant contact with such hopelessly sweet-tempered immobility gradually develops a termagant or a slave. Mrs. MacGregor's was a peace-at-any-price nature, and she preferred the more amicable course. After one year of married life she became outwardly unopinionated and yielded passively to her husband's superior judgment.

But a husband's "superior judgment" will occasionally prove insupportable to the most peacefully-inclined wife. And Mr. MacGregor's unchanging surety that he was entirely in the right in the subject under consideration this morning at the breakfast-table had almost aroused a show of argument on Mrs. MacGregor's part. Yet the same benevolent smile still curved her husband's lips. The absurdity of considering Barry a schemer! Barry, whom he (MacGregor) who prided himself on his character reading, knew to be a thoroughly honest, thoroughly stupid old lawyer! What cause had anyone to doubt him any more than millions of others who could not pay outright for their homes? Here was the Brookline house MacGregor wished to get off his hands. He preferred a summer home and winter rooms in the city. If Barry wanted the house and wished MacGregor to take a heavy mortgage on it, there was no reason to think the man would cheat. How ridiculous to suppose that any man could cheat MacGregor! And the argument ended at the breakfast-table with the pushing-back of Mrs. MacGregor's chair and her husband's conclusive smile.

Three months later, MacGregor healthily browned by the Cape Ann sun, at peace with the world, a straw hat on the back of his head, and a good cigar between his teeth, stepped leisurely from a Gloucester train and sauntered along with the hurrying crowd through the Union Station. How vulgarly energetic and excited the crowd was! What business had people to jostle a decent gentleman? He had wanted to escape the shop crowd, but this was almost as bad. What right had bare-headed Italian women to be away from home at this time in the morning—and with such dirty, squealing babies? Ugh! How he detested banana-eating children! They always managed to smear more of the fruit over themselves than they ever swallowed. And the way decent-looking people jabbed him with umbrellas and pummelled him with bags in their unheeding rush for shore—or mountain-bound trains! Actually—

A sounding whack on his shoulders roused him from his fuming, and turning around with mildly reproachful eyes, he came face to face with Langdale, one of his former neighbors in Brookline. He never had liked Langdale: he was such a rough, uncultured chap!

"Hello, Mac, how are you? Down to the city for a few days?"

"I came down to see my lawyer," answered MacGregor rather stiffly, and trying to move away.

"That so?" continued Langdale, imperturbably falling in with MacGregor's step. "I say, it looks funny out our way with your old house moved into the next street, doesn't it?"

"My old house—what the deuce you talking about?" And MacGregor forgot his distaste for anything so low as excitement, and even grew warm in the vicinity of his collar.

"Why, didn't you know? Barry's moved it into his lot in the next street. They've pretty nearly finished the job now. Haven't connected it with the foundations yet. Funny you didn't know about it. I s'pose 'cause everyone's away in that part of the country."

"The devil!" And MacGregor threw off Langdale's detaining arm, and rushed through the station, utterly oblivious of Italian women, banana-painted babies, umbrellas and bags, forgetful even of his own opinions on the vulgarity of haste. His one aim was to get to his lawyer's in the shortest time possible. Barry had cheated him—had stolen his house!