

could not sing. They restricted themselves to a small back room in a cheap boarding-house, and Roland searched the agencies and the papers daily for something suitable to his peculiar characteristics and capabilities, and found nothing. There was a great city full of people, but not one of them wanting the services of a young gentleman like Roland.

As for Denasia, she was still very weak. July and August tried her severely. Some few little garments had to be made, and this pitiful sewing was all she could manage. In the last days of August the baby was born. Denasia recovered rapidly, but the little lad was a sickly, puny child. All the more he appealed to his mother's love, and Denasia began now to comprehend something of the sin against mother-love which she herself had committed.

Perhaps she permitted her joy in her child to dominate her life too visibly; at any rate it soon began to annoy her husband.

"You are forever nursing that crying little creature, Denasia," he said one day when he returned to their small, warm room. "No one can get your attention for five minutes. You hear nothing I say. You take no interest in what I do. And the little torment is forever and forever crying.

"Baby is sick, and who is there to care for him but me?"

"We ought to be doing something. Winter is coming on. Companies are already on the road; you will find it hard to get a position of any kind, soon."

"I will go out to-morrow. I am strong enough now, I think."

"I can find nothing suitable. People seem to take an instant dislike to me."

"That is nonsense! You were always a favourite."

"I have had to sell most of my jewellery in order to provide for your sickness, Denasia. Of course I was glad to do it, you know that, but——"

"But it is my duty now, Roland. I will begin to-morrow."

So the next day Denasia went to the agencies, and Roland promised to take care of the baby. Two weeks of exhausting waiting and seeking, of delayed hope and destroyed hope, followed; and Denasia was forced to admit that she had made no impression on the managerial mind.

The poor little baby, in Roland's opinion, was to blame for every disappointment. So instead of being a loving tie between them, the poor wailing little morsel of humanity separated very love, while Roland's complaints of it really produced in his heart the impatient dislike which at first he only pretended.

He grumbled when left in charge of the cradle. As soon as Denasia was out of sight he frequently deserted his duty, and the disputes that followed hardened his heart continually against the cause of them. And when it came to naming the child, he averred that it was a matter of no importance to him, only he would not have it called Roland. "There had been," he said, "one too many of the Treshams called Roland. The name was unlucky;