

her then. It would be rather hard, unless she is guilty of some fault."

Mrs. Arnott bit her lip.

"Gentlemen understand nothing of the management of a household," she said tartly. "These girls have not our sensitive natures, either. They are quite used to knocking around the world. Are you going down town now?"

"Yes."

"I wish you'd stop and ask Dr. Hart to stop here this morning; little Clarence is feverish."

"Anything serious?"

"I hope not," the mother answered, "but I always like to take these things in time."

Dr. Hart leaned over Clarence's little crib. He involuntarily uttered the name of some malignant type of fever, just then raging in the city.

"I wish that you had sent for me before. I fear that it is too late to secure the exemption of your other little ones. But with constant care we may save the little fellow. You have a good nurse?"

"An excellent one. I can trust Natalia as I would myself."

"You are fortunate," said the doctor. He had scarcely closed the door, when Natalia came to her mistress.

"My month expires to-morrow, madam, will you pay me my wages, and let me take my departure at once?"

"But, Natalia, the baby is sick,—"

"One's first duty is to one's own; I would not risk the infection for twice what you pay me."

And Natalia packed her trunk and departed without coming to the nursery to bid little Clarence good-bye.

The cook was next to give warning. Matilda, the laundress, took herself off without any preliminary ceremony.

"I am going too," said the seamstress.

"Mrs. Arnott wouldn't have lifted her finger if we'd been dying, and I believe in doing to others as they do to me."

And almost before she knew it, the stricken mother was left alone by the bedside of her suffering baby. Neighbors crossed on the other side of the street like the priests and levites of old; friends contented themselves by sending in to inquire: even hired nurses avoided the malignant fever.

"Is there no one to help me?" she moaned, wringing her white jeweled hands together. "Have all pity and womanly sympathy died out of the world?"

A slight noise caused her to turn, and Kathleen O'Neil was at her side, busy arranging the table.

"I thought you, too, had gone, Kath'een!" she said.

"Sure, ma'am, what should I be going for!" asked Kathleen, simply, "and the bits of children sick, and you in sore trouble? I nursed the little brothers and sisters at home, and know just what needs to be done."

And she took little Clarence in her arms with a soft tenderness that went to the mother's heart.

"Are you not afraid Kathleen?"

"What should I be afraid of, madam? Isn't God's sky over us all, whether it's the green banks of Ireland or the church steeple of this great confusing city? Oh, madam, He'll not take that bonny baby from us."

All Mrs. Arnott's children had the fever—last of all she was prostrated by it—and Kathleen watched over every one, faithful, true and tender.

"Kathleen," Mrs. Arnott said the first day she sat up, the Irish girl arranging the pillows about her wasted form, "oh, Kathleen, I don't deserve this."

"Sure, ma'am, if we all had our deserts in this world, it's a sorry place it would be, I'm thinking, laughed Kathleen."

"But, Kathleen, I was cruel to you—so perfectly heartless!"

"We won't talk of it, ma'am, dear," said Kathleen evasively.

"But, say just once that you forgive me?" pleaded the lady once so haughty.

"I forgive you, ma'am, as free as the sunshine," Kathleen answered softly.

"And you'll stay with me always, and be my friend, Kathleen?"

"If God wills it, ma'am."

And Mrs. Arnott put her lips to kiss the fresh, cool cheeks of Irish Kathleen.

The years that passed since then, have made men and women of the little people that Kathleen nursed through the fever, and strangers who visit Mrs. Arnott scarcely know what to make of the plump, comely, middle-aged woman