

her kerchiefed bosom swelling with indignation at the reckless extravagance of the fire, her crest of a white cap bristling, her sharp little face thrust forward, like an angry hen that finds her nest meddled with—had taken no note of the stranger. Until the girl said, with a careless shrug :

"I *have* burned a beauté of your wood ; that is because you left me no candle. Use the one in your hand, tante Marguite, and see we have a visitor."

Tante Marguite came hastily forward, with a quick change of tone, a ring of relief in it.

"Eh, it is monsieur the doctor ?"

"Yes, I am Dr. Kendal. I received your message—"

She had turned to the girl :

"Go, then, tell madame I am showing monsieur the doctor up."

The girl rose, as of habit, at the peremptory order ; but lingeringly, in a surprised way, with an evident desire to hear more.

But not a word more was added, until the door had closed on her.

Then :

"Listen a little, monsieur," the woman went on, in her provincial French, "I fear you will find madame failing fast. It is, however, true that she is near as young as me" ; with a complacent drawing up of her own alert, round figure.