

saving up for years and years," she said, "and now I've got it."

"A baby!" I repeated. "What for?"

"To keep," Tryphena said. "Oh," she said, "I love babies so. I love them. . . . Long, long ago I said I'd have one—save up and buy it. Now I've got it!"

She clasped her hands and looked at me. Her face was full of delicate colour.

"Yesterday," she said, "I bought my baby!"

I took a breath.

"Where did you buy it?" I said; "at the market?"

"No," she said, gravely innocent; "the Sisters got it for me. Long ago I told the Sisters. I asked them to look out."

She looked me in the eye.

"Listen," she said. "I been saving. Oh, I wouldn't take a baby," said Tryphena, "not if I hadn't money so I could keep it comfortable—start it. I done well. I've made my little pile. I've worked all right—I got my pension coming on."

She drew a deep, deep breath.

"And when you got your pension at your back," said she, "*that* makes the difference. You can afford to look at any woman. You can get old all right. And"—she caught her breath—"see what my money's done for me. I got my baby for it. It's my own—to keep!"

I took another breath. All the ten years that I had known Tryphena we had talked of housework: how to wash paint—where to buy chickens—how to cook them; we had been calm, self-respecting human