

She flushed with pleasure and a look of tenderness and gratitude softened her brown eyes.

"She is getting sweeter and sweeter every day, Hobby," she answered in tones full of motherly love. "And you can't imagine how clever she is becoming, too. She is beginning to talk."

"Tell him the story of the hen!" interposed Allan.

"Oh yes, I must tell you that," and Maud set herself to narrate a comic little incident in which a hen and the little girl played the leading rôles.

"I must really see her again quite soon!" said Hobby. "I'll come and stay with you in a fortnight's time. It has been dull in Buffalo, you tell me?"

"Deadly dull!" exclaimed Maud; and her eyebrows went up in horror at the recollection, and a look of real unhappiness came into her face. "You know, of course, that the Lindleys have gone to Montreal?"

"Yes, that is a pity."

"Grace Kossat has been away in Egypt since the autumn." And Maud proceeded to open out her heart to Hobby. How dreary a whole day can be! And how dreary a whole evening! And in tones of moek reproach she added, "And you know what sort of company Mac is, don't you, Hobby? He neglects me worse now than ever. Often he doesn't leave the factory all day. In addition to all his other treasures he has installed a whole lot of drills which bore away all night long through granite and steel and goodness knows what. He dancés attendance on these drills as if they were invalids. He does really, Hobby. He dreams of them in his sleep!"

Allan laughed out loud.

"You let him go his own way," replied Hobby, his eyes twinkling behind their pale lashes. "He knows what he's about and you are not going to be jealous of a pair of drills!"

"I simply hate the things," retorted Maud. "And don't you imagine he would have brought me to New York if he hadn't had business here!"

"Oh, I say, Maud!" remonstrated Allan.

But Hobby had been reminded by Maud's remarks of the most important thing he had to say to Allan. A thoughtful