

A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM

In strained suspense the mother continued to crouch by the side of the bed, not daring to move lest the little sufferer might be disturbed and waken again.

And now the curtains were parted no longer; the strain of all had been too great. With face buried in his hands, and with head bent low, he stood in the dimly lighted corridor thinking it all out.

The baby lips had made it all clear now—his neglect of the heart-broken girl-mother, with her intense affection for himself. She had always been exceedingly dear to him; yet what different ways each had of showing their affection. The supreme happiness to her had been when he was with her, while he, content with her devotion and self-sacrifice, had simply been drifting back into his bachelor life again, and taking from her the companionship she prized more highly than aught else the world could give. How great, too, had been her provocation to spend the weary hours she had waited and watched in other pleasures as he had done; he had even urged it.

With the advent of this recollection, a strange misgiving came into his heart. In this, her great trouble, which it had been her lot to meet alone, might she not have changed with the crisis, and might not bitter resolves have been taken which would make the future different to them?

He could no longer bear the distress his fears were conjuring up.

He again silently parted the curtains. As before, she was still crouched by the side of the bed, her