

Then, with the child holding to her hand, and the book of fairy stories in the other hand, Priscilla Meadows went across the worn patch of grass and opened the rusty gate—carefully closing it after her—and stepped across the road to Sockitt's. There was always a certain pride in the heart of Miss Meadows at this hour of the day—foolish pride, perhaps, but still forgivable; for most of the boarders had arrived for the evening meal; and Miss Meadows could sail through them, with the child clinging to her fingers, and could mount the stairs, even contriving sometimes to hum some foolish nursery rhyme. She was quite aware of the glances that followed her; and she was glad of that, because it meant in a sense incense on the altar of her beloved. And then the small and lovely limbs to be unclothed and bathed; a little white-clad figure kneeling beside a small bed; and then Susette nestling down to rosy sleep.

There were kindly people who whispered incredulously that Miss Meadows grew younger-looking every day.

Bob Sockitt did not come in to dinner. That was a habit that had begun because the habits of the man were irregular; and it had been kept up. Bob Sockitt had a "snack of something" whenever he should happen to come in; and he generally partook of it standing awkwardly in the little room at the end of the hall that was Mrs. Sockitt's sanctum. At which time it was his custom, if Mrs. Sockitt happened to be there, to entertain her with an account of the exact position of the country from a political and economic point of view—speaking for the most part with his mouth full, and with some considerable heat, and emphasising those remarks with a forward bend