

She had been sick, but was now better. This was chiefly a visit of inquiry and a loan of medical appliances, necessary, yet too expensive for the woman to purchase. She thanked the grey-gowned nurse, and promised to follow her directions; and after a few minutes' pleasant talk we came away.

* * *

Eleven-thirty,—and we were in the bedroom of a woman in an advanced stage of consumption.

An intelligent-looking woman, of refined face, with great blue eyes and brown hair; speech and voice both indicated that she had been accustomed to better surroundings. Yet the room was not devoid of comforts; there was no lack of essentials.

She welcomed the nurse and received the visitor courteously, looking out at me from the dark blue eyes, and talking a little between the difficult breaths.

It was a long process, the bathing and brushing and the rubbing of the tender skin with alcohol. She was so weary, so utterly weary, when it was finished.

She wished us a "Happy New Year" in a faint voice, and with eyes looking through the leafless tree-boughs outside the little window, wondered "whether she would live to see the spring."

Then, being very weak, almost while her fingers lay in ours, she, too, fell asleep.

* * *

Twelve-thirty,—and we were standing in the most pitiful of all the homes in our morning round. The nurse had told me the circumstances on our way. The husband is in the insane asylum, the two-year-old baby in the Sick Children's Hospital, with no hope of its little life. The wife, a refined woman of superior birth, struggling for three years to keep the poor home together and support the two remaining children, and finally succumbing through sheer overwork, worry, and lack of food.

"I called at the house by mere accident a few days ago and found her prostrated, without a cent, no fuel, no food, and her two children playing about her," said the nurse

She opened the door of a shabby cottage as she finished, and we entered into a room cold, disorderly, chilly, yet with simple home belongings and home trinkets all about it.

A pretty, golden-haired little maiden of five or six looked up at us.

"I'm Mabel," she said. "Willie isn't dressed yet. Mamma went out this morning to do some work, and she told us to be good till she comed home. Here's our dinner!" She pointed to two slices of bread and butter upon the table. "She said she'd come home pretty early, 'cause it's the day before Sunday. Willie wouldn't let me dress him."

There was no fire in the stove, and the baby boy of four was snuggling under the quilts. The nurse coaxed him into his clothes, and then we all searched about the rooms for a missing stocking to cover one little bare, fat foot.

They were such pretty children, with a wealth of yellow, tangled hair that shone like sunshine in the dreary rooms.

"I am surprised that the mother has gone out," said the nurse, a little anxiously; "she was so utterly weak yesterday. But I suppose she had the chance to earn a little money, and needed it for food and fire."

"Why does she not leave the little ones at the day nursery?" I asked.

"The charge is ten cents a day per child, and she cannot pay it."

It was dreadful. The desolate, chill rooms: the weather-stained walls; the poorbit of a home, which a woman had struggled in vain to keep; the insane father and sick baby; and these pretty little ones playing about so uncomprehending of their mother's sorrow and weakness.

"The mission is looking after them now," said the nurse. "The mother is to go into the Convalescent Home for the winter in order to rest and get her strength up. These little ones will go into one of the homes, the baby will die, and the father will probably die in the asylum, as he is a consumptive."

It was hard to come away and leave those fair little babies alone

in the chilly, desolate rooms, waiting the weary mother's homecoming. But there were other calls to make.

* * *

One o'clock,—and now we were in a tidy home in a rear, one of a row of innumerable small cottages.

Here the case was one of watching and expectancy, that of a bright young woman whose baby girl of two clung to her gown.

She looked impatiently forward to the time when she would be able to turn in and do something, since "Jim was out of work, and there wasn't a cent in the house."

She did not speak fretfully, but with a matter-of-fact air, more sadly expressive than any complaining. A few words of encouragement and patience and a picture-book for baby sufficed here.

* * *

One thirty: Another home spoiled by drink, another husband out of work, and another woman with body and mind weakened by ill-treatment. Her big fawn-like eyes looked timidly at us; yet she was glad to welcome the nurse and tell of her sickness.

Here, too, the satchel was opened, and discovered something for children and mother.

"That finishes the list for the morning," said the little grey-gowned nurse. And we stepped out into the gay streets, so full of holiday cheer, and took swift passage across the city to the homely little headquarters of this most blessed mission.

FAITH FENTON.

A DROP OF WATER.

Water that is now in the ocean and in the river has been many times in the sky. The history of a single drop taken out of a glass of water is really a romantic one, says a writer in the *Museum*. No traveler has ever accomplished such distances in his life. That particle may have reflected the palm trees of coral islands and have caught the sun's ray in the arch that spans a cloud clearing away from the valleys of Cumberland or California. It may have been carried by the Gulf