

Committed to his Charge

the star of Sweeting had set, never to rise again, she held her peace, trusting to circumstances, to her own guile and to other people's laziness, to bring round a certain part of her old power. She had an unshaken faith in the divine law of compensation, and waited patiently. Her dismay, though strictly hidden, was great. It brought back to her that terrible moment in childhood, when, in a sheltered home-corner, a sudden falling-out had ended in the demolition of her "house"—a rickety packing-case set on end, wherein she displayed fragments of broken crockery, a three-legged chair and two dolls, her "babies," Jerusha and Dorothy by name, who owed their existence to the ordered decapitation of her father's gateposts. The anguish of those moments, when the child-mother saw her three-legged treasure sent flying, her packing-case demolished, and Jerusha and Dorothy making an unpremeditated sacrifice in her step-mother's kitchen fire, could never be repeated. Alas, real mother joys were never to be hers! From many causes the word home had no significance for her, except when by small services, adaptable ways and a capacity for relieving others of unwelcome duties, she could