

A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM

He laughed softly. "What contrition will soon be hers."

To-night his eyes were brighter than what was their wont, for a distinguished foreign guest had been entertained by the club, and the toasts had been of unusual frequency.

In the mood he was in, it came to him that he would surprise his wife with his presence. He would ascend the stairs softly to their room, and jestingly pose before her as one injured by her neglect.

So, slowly and noiselessly, he began the ascent of the thickly-carpeted stairs, his lips parted in a smile at the picture his imagination was conjuring up.

He was near the top of the stairs when he drew back in abrupt surprise; the extreme quiet was suddenly broken by a child's terrified, delirious cry. Following the cry came the sound of his wife's voice—tender soothing and deep anxiety in its tone.

His first impulse was to hurry quickly forward to the little one's room, but it came to him that he might frighten his wife by his unexpected presence; so he went forward quickly and softly as before. Just as he was about to draw back the curtains and enter the chamber where the sick child lay, he heard the little one, in tearful, disconnected way, say:

"Papa go a market, and mamma cry and cry. No cry, mamma, no cry; me stay home wis you." The child was crying bitterly in her raving. Still haunting the little mind was the childish distress and dismay at the first tears she had ever caught her mother shedding.