

As a housekeeper, as a wife, as a mother, Mrs. Fenton excelled. Her own small hands performed all the lighter duties in the home, and performed them well. Her bread was of the lightest and sweetest. Her chambers were kept in that delicate purity which rests weary heads, and sometimes hearts. Her windows were as clear as hands could make them; her snowy curtains were looped in graceful folds, and with just the right tint of ribbon to blend well with surroundings. Her vines and plants climbed and budded and blossomed in luxurious fashion. Her husband's buttons were always in place, held by firm threads of her placing; his collars and cuffs shone brilliantly, for her own hands clear-starched and ironed them. Indeed, in whatsoever department of home life you looked, you would be likely, after thorough investigation, to pronounce Mrs. Fenton a model.

And yet, in the warm summer morning of which I write, she left her berries scorching on the vines, and her pretty tea-room in disarray, while she sat, with sleeves up-rolled, and leaned her brown head against the broom, and let the teardrops fall unheeded on her white work-apron. Not many of them: she was not a woman given to weeping. She arose presently and brushed back the tears in impatience at her weakness, and swept vigorously, and reduced the room to its accustomed beauty, omitting no item of usual routine, all the while with certain sad-looking wrinkles in her forehead, and a sore spot in her heart.

What was the trouble? Well, you remember that I said she was a model mother. Young Robert Fenton, her only boy — indeed, her only child — was the darling of her royal mother-heart.

For fourteen years she might almost have been said to live and breathe for him. She had sacrificed time and strength and quiet for him, in that royal way which is a characteristic of motherhood, with that grand whole-heartedness about it that never uses the word "sacrifice,"

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