

poor scabby thing it was, that someone had thrown out; but Martha had given it new earth and lamp-black and castor oil, and had washed its misshapen leaves and coaxed it back to beauty. Poor Martha! She had done her best for everyone, and it was an awful blow to her when she realized she might die . . . and leave Billy and poor old Tim. And how she had fought for life!

"It's no time for me to up and die, and me with a good job five days a week, and poor Billy in trouble again, and my man home from the brush camp all crippled up with rheumatism . . . I say it's no time for me to die . . . I can stand the pain . . . if it don't choke me." . . . These were the last words she had said, for a fit of coughing came on her just then, drowned by the roar of a long freight train that hurtled past her house . . . and Martha Minnis's hold on life loosened and broke!

Mary Coulter's breath caught in a sob when she thought of it, and the woman beside her looked at her sideways and with disapproval. It was Miss Proxy, who had a room third door down the hall. Miss Proxy made flowers for a millinery store, and held herself high above the people who work by the day at unskilled labor. . . . Mary Coulter straightened her shoulders and fixed her mind on the crimson roses. . . . They soon would be withering into dust on the clay of the hillside . . . so she would feed her eyes on them while she could. She would try to listen to the minister, too, for he was telling about the hills of God, where the flowers never fade . . . but she did wish he would not call Martha "the deceased." Martha Minnis was her name, and a good one at that. It should last her at least until the ground closed over her!