

will not forget you. And if at some future time you should want a friend, come to us, and you shall find one. Do not be afraid. Remember, *I mean what I say.*"

"And if ever a gentleman and lady looked kind and spoke as if they meant what they said, the master and mistress were the ones to-day," were Sarah's words, when, with a second mingling of tears and smiles, she told her intended husband how she had parted with her employers.

Three days later, Sarah Mason was married to Richard Schofield, and no very long time passed before a troop of youthful Wareings called at the cottage to see how their old favourite was getting on, and received a delighted welcome.

In due time, the same youngsters, grown a year older, were ready to squabble over a small cradle which held Sarah's first baby, as they all wanted to nurse it at once, and without regard to the fact that it was asleep and had no immediate need of nursing.

Next there was another farewell scene. Dr. Wareing inherited a fine estate at a distance, and left the place where he had been practising for many years. But he, his wife and children visited their old servant before they removed, bestowed upon her many little tokens of remembrance, and renewed the old promise not to forget her.

Again the master whom Sarah had always honoured, and who was respected by all who knew him, bade her apply to Mrs. Wareing or himself in any season of trouble. "You shall find a friend willing to help you. Do not be afraid to write," said the doctor; and he left his address, in order that there might be no difficulty in doing so.

Several years passed. At first the young Wareings wrote now and then to Sarah Schofield, but as their old nurse was not much of a scholar, and a letter cost her more time and labour than she could well spare, this one-sided correspondence ceased.

Sarah's cottage was now almost overflowing with half-a-dozen little people, like a series of steps one above the other. She worked early and late, was cleanly, careful, and striving, but found it hard to stretch the earnings of her husband so as to make the ends meet.

So far she had done it somehow, and kept out of debt; but a very slack time came, and Richard had only work for four days instead of six. Worse still, one little Schofield caught scarlet fever, and soon three others were laid low with the same complaint.

If poor Sarah were asked to-day how she struggled on during the first weeks, she would say she could not tell anybody. Except for the help of a couple of middle-aged childless neighbours, she would have been worn out; but these, and without fee or reward, saved the over-taxed mother from utterly breaking down.

Even her husband had to find a home under another roof, for his employers had told him that he must not come from an infected house. So the wife had not even the comfort of her husband's company.

Poor Sarah! she had been very brave before, but this sickness had made a wan and weary woman of

her. "They would hardly know me now," she thought, as she caught sight of her face in the little looking-glass.

"They," meant her old master and mistress, whose service she left, as a bright, hopeful girl, ten years before.

Sarah was searching for some small matter in the looking-glass drawer, when she saw an envelope on which was written, in her late master's clear handwriting, "Dr. Wareing, Ash Hurst, Glandford, Kent."

It was the doctor's address, given for use in any time of special trouble, and the sight of it brought to mind the kind words and promise of help given with it. Sarah had put it with several other treasures into this drawer, and now it seemed as though she could see the face of him who gave it, and hear him once more repeat the assurance, "I mean what I say."

Had there ever been a time in Sarah's life when she more needed the help of a friend? Surely not. And yet she could not make up her mind to write and ask for it.

Why was this? Not because she doubted the promise, for often had she said, "I know the master meant it;" but it was the thought of the many kindnesses already received that made her hesitate.

"When I left them they all gave me something towards housekeeping, and when they went away into Kent they stocked my little place with all sorts of odds and ends that they did not mean to take, and would not sell, because they would do me so much more good than the bit of money would do them. It would be like imposing on kindness to ask for more. Besides, I have heard nothing from the young ladies for more than two years."

So pondered Sarah, and she put back the address into the little drawer.

But times grew worse and trials harder. Richard had only three days' work a week; the children who were getting better wanted nourishing food; and there was another child at the worst of the fever.

Then Sarah made up her mind to write, and in very simple words, by no means perfect in spelling, she told her troubles, asked for the help she so sadly needed, and finished with, "I could not have begged for myself: you have done so much—far more than I ever deserved—but I can plead for the children."

Just as quickly as the post could bring back a letter, one came from Mrs. Wareing, enclosing money and promising more. There were words of sympathy from all, advice from the good doctor, loving messages from the young people, and just one line of reproach, "Why did you not send sooner? Surely you believed that we were in earnest in promising to be your friends always, and to help you in time of need?"

"Oh, I have been a foolish woman," said Sarah, as she laughed and cried by turns over the precious letter. "I had only to ask and to have. Only to believe what my kind master and mistress said, and to stretch out my hand for what they were so willing to give, and yet I held back. But I have learned a lesson. I had the means in my hands, and I did not