



LIFE is not so short but that there is always time enough for courtesy.—Emerson.

## In The Dark Hours

By IDA M. SHEPLER  
(Farm, Stock and Home)

**A**CROSS the supper table Marie faced her husband. There was dumb mutiny in the expression of his eyes, and this look in her own which means, "Oh, what matters anything now?" He was merely sipping his coffee, while she sat back, refusing to touch the food before her. This, perhaps, had not been her first complaint to her husband, but it had been his first time to make a cross retort to her complaints, and for the minute she resented the retort with a bitterness she had been so sure she could never feel in this way toward anything John might say or do.

"I am going on the hunt for work. On the tramp, as it were. With the strikes on and my ignorance of the kind of work you would have me do, and which I could not get to do were I well equipped with experience at this time, there is nothing left for me to do but go, hoping for better luck," he had told her. Her answer came quick: "Go, and—" Her lips formed the word "stay," though her lips refused to sound the word. John well understood. Rising, he flung a bill upon her plate, saying with it:

"I have paid the rent. There is enough to last you a while, maybe, and, Marie, remember that I really had no voice in leaving our country home and the start we were getting to—wards independence."

She angrily interrupted, "You had no money. This morning, where did you get this?" Her glance was searching. "Your watch, your lodge ring, are gone. Have you sold or pawned them? Has it come to the pawnshop with you, John? Blame your inefficiency upon me, a woman, I thought I married a man capable of doing well anywhere. It seems that—" It was his turn to interrupt. He was going out of the door, and turned to say it:

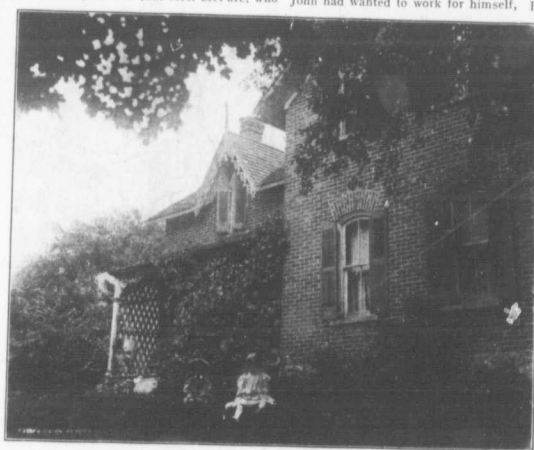
"Marie, you have proved a failure also—a failure in the dark hours of a man's life."

Before she could answer he had shut the door and gone, and gone without telling her where, or so much as a good-bye.

Her bitter protest against this poverty lately threatening, this manner of living, was already giving way to a fear of something awful coming to her. And then she remembered all day he had searched for work and had eaten nothing, and she had acted as though she did not care that he might be hungry. After all she had thought of nothing but her own vexation with fate.

And in the dark hours she was a

failure to the man who loved her, and whom she loved. Shortly she began wondering why she had been so irritable all this day. Perhaps it was the stifling air, and her shut-in rooms; perhaps it was that Mrs. McFare, who



Making a Home is as Much a Matter of Planting as of Building

Mr. Lock, whose home in Northumberland Co., Ont., is here illustrated, has grasped one great home as is the house itself. Notice the overhanging trees, the climatic vines on the veranda and the cedar hedge running off to the barnyard. The best products of the farm, Percy and Kathleen, are also seen in the picture. Isn't it the planting that makes this home so attractive?

lived in the airiest, roomiest apartments of the house, had come in to show her a lavish lot of fine apparel Mr. McFare had ordered for his shallow little wife. The contrast was so great between these and her own shabby clothes, that really, after all, were not so bad as she imagined.

As Marie cleared away the untouched meal, Mrs. McFare came in to get her dress hooked. She was going down town to meet her husband. They would have dinner down town, then go to the opera. The woman Marie felt that she would go wild if she did not soon go away, and answered her in distraught manner. After all, Mrs. McFare's husband made his money in shady ways, so the neighbors had told Marie, and neglected his wife shamefully, except by fits and starts.

After Mrs. McFare had gone out, Marie heard her down the hall telling another woman that something was wrong with that stuck-up Marie this evening. "You take it from me," she

added, "that she is a regular vixen, without a kind word lately for that big, handsome husband of hers. I wouldn't put up with it if I was him. He's too good for her."

Marie shut her door with a slam, though only through this hall could she get air to-night. "A failure as a wife, and a vixen." Truly she was getting her character well read.

But was she? Deep in her heart she knew she was neither, though she had shown signs that way. To-night she lay and tossed, going over and over the time when she, a pretty country girl, just out of school, had first met John after he had come to oversee the big Overlesse stock farms. His competence in this, for a young man, and his salary, had appealed to her as something great, and himself as something so much better. Other girls had fallen in love with John, but she had won him over all.

They had gone to live in a pretty house and she had not been lonely, for at Overlesse was nearly like town. Then, after two or three years John had wanted to work for himself,

deal, she said it in such a way that John finally became alarmed, believing she would die if he did not make some change. "I will rent a farm nearer town," he told her.

"Why not go to town altogether?" she pleaded. "The sale of the stuff on the farm with what you have in the bank will buy you a share in some good town business that will make money faster than on a farm."

At first John refused to consider this at all, but loving her as he did, little by little he began to listen until, still with misgivings, he consented to try it.

His money secured him a leading share in a business he had yet to learn how to handle. They rented a house with an elegant home on a fashionable street, and for a time all moved favorably. But only for a time. Suddenly the business collapsed. Dishonesty of the manager was the main reason. No matter what the reason, one or many—John's money was all gone.

He tried various employments. His experience in city work was nothing. He had strength, but he was not ashamed to work at any honest, if rough, work, but this and the moving from bad to worse to land in an apartment house, tried the pride of Marie to the utmost.

Of late it had grown still worse. There was work for no man of John's kind in the town. "Not unless I become a scab," he told her. "I will set up no such fight as that, besides right is on the side of the striking men. I will not enlist to take the place of one." And here Marie was with him.

Nearly morning, Marie sank into her first troubled sleep, to wake dreaming of quiet country ways, and cool, green meadows. The city noise had been from the first an irritant to John's nerves. Of late it was growing to be more than a mere irritation to Marie; it was fairly making her sick though she would not own to it. The jam of street cars, the whistle and shriek of trains so near, the clang of bells and street traffic mingling with the sultry morning heat, added to a headache, was sending her into distraction. And John gone, where? Oh, that was the worst. She was nearly on the verge of a nervous collapse.

As soon as possible, Marie opened her door to let in air. The door straight across the hall was open, and the dressmaker who occupied that room was talking to a neighbor.

"Yes," she was saying, "when me and Tom come to town we thought we'd never be lonely; but, say, town is a lonely place unless you've the money to go to lots of things and that we hadn't. We wouldn't take up with the low-downs and the high-ups wasn't for the likes of us. Of course, we had a few friends presently, but like ourselves they had to work and was tired when night come. And I thought I'd die with the stay at home so much."

"Next, sly like, I began asking the few about me to let me help with their sewin'. Next, I was bringin' it home to do, Tom declarin' I'd kill myself. Why, the little to do was the killin' part for me. Then beside that work comin' in was the company it brought me. Folks runnin' in from way over town to ask about makin' this and that. I've my own money. I'm helpin' Tom out as a woman should do. What does women want to be parasites for, anyway?"

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