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Before the Mountains Were Brought Forth, Even From Everlasting to Everlasting Thou Art God.

A Deferred Call.

(Bertha Gerneaux Woods, in the 'Congregationalist'.)

It was at the close of the mission meeting. A pause had followed some pleading word of the young leader, and then all eyes had turned to the solitary figure that rose in response. It was a young woman, and the hands that clutched nervously at the bench in front were red and coarsened with work. Just an instant she stood, then dropped back into her seat, her weak little chin seeming to lose itself in the not very fresh neck ribbon.

'Nearer, my God, to thee.' What tenderness and love the girl in white seemed to put into that little piano! Then, as the soft soprano voice rose, the woman hid her face in her hands.

A few minutes more and the room was almost empty. Arabella was alone with the young man who led the meeting, the girl in white and the rough-spoken, but kindly, superintendent of the mission.

She looked at them with a little hysterical laugh and eyes reddened by gathering tears. The cheap red roses on her hat shook in unison with her quickened breathing. Just what had moved her to rise

she could hardly have told. She only knew she was shaken by this strange, new emotion. Perhaps mixed with it was a bit of almost unconscious elation at the nearness of this tall, slim creature in white, whom she had sometimes passed on the street with half-envious admiration, feeling to what a different, unattainable world she belonged.

Now the fair, high-bred face was looking into hers with tender solicitude, but there was a touch of embarrassment in it, too. The young leader of the meeting said something to her in a low tone, and then they all knelt, and each in turn prayed for Arabella. The superintendent came first. He was a 'convert' of the mission himself, and his words came with great earnestness. Then the young leader of the meeting prayed, and, after a few moments' pause, the girl in white, in a hurried, embarrassed voice, that told of unaccustomed effort. Arabella, who had waited tremblingly for that one soft voice, hid her face in her red, beringed hands with a quick, choking sob, and in the silence that followed the soft prayer of the girl in white she prayed for herself in a voiceless way. There was a strange mixture in her mind of the vague and the real, and her heart, reaching out faintly to the unseen Presence, at the same time

clung to the sweet nearness of the seen.

They all took her hand as they arose, and the girl in white held it for a moment, touched by the wistfulness in the reddened eyes. 'I'm coming to see you,' she said, impulsively, 'sometime this week, if you'll tell me where you live,' and in a moment more Arabella had slipped quickly out into the warm summer night.

The young man who had led the meeting and the girl in white walked slowly homeward.

'You won't forget to go to see her, will you?' he said, rather insistently; 'it is so easy for one to slip away like that, and you could see that she was all nervous and overwrought to-night. Yes, of course, it was perfectly genuine, but I don't imagine any of her impressions are very deep ones—with that sort of a face. She is one of those who need to be looked after and encouraged.'

'Yes,' the girl assented, 'of course I'll go to see her.' Somehow she was feeling miserably tired and shaken, and under it all was a little irritation that she had been so wrought upon in that mission meeting. It was a close, unrefreshing air that blew from the heated asphalt. Squalid families were gathered on the sidewalk in front of their wretched