

A ROMANCE OF BILLY-GOAT HILL

tell the police that I throwed my baby in the ash barrel and abandoned it! It don't make no difference now, nothin' makes no difference but Chick. Oh, my God! How long have they been?"

"They will be down very soon now, Myrtella. Don't tear your handkerchief like that. Here, take mine."

But Myrtella's eyes were too full of terror for tears; she sat with her hands locked about her knees swaying to and fro.

"I've never told nobody," she went on wildly; "all these years I've kept it bottled up in my soul 'til it's eat it plumb out. I never done it to Chick! He was n't Chick then. He was just somethin' that belonged to a devil. Then he growed to be Chick, and all my hate turned to love, and now God's gittin' even, I knowed He would! He would n't let him live now, just to spite me!"

"Myrtella!" Miss Lady's voice commanded indignantly. "Don't you dare say such things! Who knows but this very minute God's giving Chick back to you? Perhaps He is taking this way of showing you He forgives you. Pray to Him, Myrtella! Ask Him to do what's best for Chick, whatever it may be."

Myrtella's head had sunken on her knees, and her coarse, work-hardened hands were clinging to Miss Lady's slender ones.