

to come, from which, between members of a family, there is no escape.

"Alison," said Tibbie quite quietly, after she had unrolled her veil and smoothed it out and laid off her hat, "You're not well yourself. You think about everybody, you take care of everybody. Who is taking care of you?"

"I'm all right, Tib. Don't worry. It's just the state of affairs in the town. It's horrible to be mixed up with labour questions and all these big industrial problems into which everybody says neither sentiment nor common feeling must enter. And I never can, night or day, get away from the fact that there are women and children who never have enough to eat, not more than a stone's-throw from my door."

"But why does Mr. Crewe hold out so long? Isn't it what Madge would call a frightful economic loss to him?"

"Yes, but either he is rich enough not to care, or he is determined to make them pay in full."

The vagueness of the reply filled Tibbie with dissatisfaction.

"How is he, Alison? You have said very little about him in your letters of late."

"He is as well as any man can be who lives as he does, but you'll see him presently. Dinner will be on the table in ten minutes, so I'd better leave you in peace. How did the interview with the publisher go off?"

"Oh, excellently. My book is to be published in November in time to catch the Christmas trade. Mr. Dennington was most kind and encouraging to me and not at all fearsome."

"He has got something he's been looking for perhaps," said Alison absently. "Well, I'll be off downstairs."

Tibbie by speed and effort was almost ready when she heard the gong, only rung when there were visitors in the house.