

used to sit upon—maidenly white figure with bowed head, the sun in her hair, and her white-and-golden work upon her knees.

Against a little octagon table he leaned and tilted with long muzzle at the work-basket thereon. It fell; and strewed the floor with a thousand little knick-knacks.

He leaped down and searched amid the wreckage. Her thimble he took between his teeth, pinched delicately, shook, and snuffled into; a ball of wool he held with one firm paw, hopped round it on three legs, and nosed beneath; then into the gutted basket he thrust his nose, and scratched the bottom of it with diligent fore-paw.

“She is not there, Danny,” said the voice of the Laird.

Danny looked up and saw him standing in the door, stark shadow of a man; then he snapped up his slipper, and trailed out through the glass-door into the green-smelling house of flowers beyond.

There was Robin at work, and with weeping eye; for he too had seen.

Here had been Missie's nursery of old. Here she had wandered with fond-tending fingers; and now it seemed that these, her children, drooped palely and without hope for lack of love, for lack of her to love.

Among them Danny searched. Round the rim of each flower-pot he sniffed with careful nose. One pale fuchsia that she had loved above all, because it ailed, and tended even on that last evening, that hung now brokenly like a love-sick girl, he stayed at. Round it he searched, eager, intent, his tail still low, yet stirring as with reviving hope; nor would abandon it, as though about it lingered still some far, faint rosy breath of her dear ministry.

“She is no there, Danny,” said Robin chokily; and Danny looked at him.

In the Morning Room the clock chimed twelve. At that of old his lady would arise and fold away her work, neat, demure, old-maidenly; then she would skip, cry to him joyously,