

that was what I was thinking of," he explained awkwardly; "but we'll help you to win through," recovering himself, "I and Edith too. We haven't seen as much of each other as we should have done those past years. . . ."

"I know," she assented calmly. "Edith and me . . . we didn't quite take to each other, she being different, not that she made me feel it, and so we weren't quite intimate, so to speak. . . ."

"Yes, yes, pity too. You'd have learnt from each other. Edith, she'd have got to know something of woman's real duties, her place."

She interrupted in her simple fashion. "You and Edith don't quite hit it off; I know that; not like poor Josiah and me. The trouble with Edith is, she wanted too much from marriage. . . . Now marriage isn't for 'appiness—not for the woman, anyways."

He moved a little in his chair. "Not for self-indulgent happiness, of course," he agreed in his grandiloquent style, "but, of course, there is a higher happiness."

"Well, for 'oly happiness, perhaps," she admitted, "but for real 'appiness, now is it likely?" expanding a little. "You marry a man, work for 'im, nurse 'im, put up with all his man's ways, because anyway you're saved from being an old maid, which is worse than being unhappy, being ridiculous. But 'appiness, real 'appiness, that is what you don't get at the time. That comes afterwards!"

"Afterwards?" he echoed, with a touch of alarmed wonder.

She rolled her black-edged handkerchief round her worn fingers, speaking a little brokenly. "When it's all over, and you know you've done your duty by him, alive and dead, . . . and . . . and you can look back and say. . . ."

Her voice trailed into silence. She was not used to speech; on her brother's visits during those last score of years she had never spoken like this, the meek housewife and silent servant-hostess of her "men folk." She did not notice her brother's disturbed, bewildered face, till his voice broke in, "Hannah, didn't you love your husband?"

She turned upon him, red with the indignation natural to her class and

training. "How dare you ask that, James Reid, and me with those ten yards of crape and all? Crape isn't worn nowadays, so the dressmaker told me, but I believe in doing what's right, and being a widow as is a widow, as the Bible says. And so I've done all I should do, 'is tombstone ordered already, and the motto, 'With Thee All Joy Departs.' . . . I saw—I thought of it when he had double pneumonia . . . three years ago. . . ."

She sat still a moment, ruminating, and her brother, too, thought. This was not the loving silent wife of whom he had made an ideal for at least a dozen years past. He realised now that the difference in their ages in youth, their long separation afterwards, had built up a vision of "womanliness" which in these few minutes of intimate talk simply vanished away. Like so many democratic middle-class men, he had a vague impression that if a woman was simple of speech and uneducated, she would possess what he called the "higher education of the heart." At this realisation of another side to his ideal he sat still dazed. He was aroused by the touch on his arm, and looked round eagerly for some softening of the shock. "Yes, dear," he said gently.

"Are rates and taxes high in your place, Kelveston?" she asked.

"Rates and . . ." he began in new bewilderment. "What do you . . ."

She interrupted him, her eyes speculative. "That's where I thought of settling down. A hen run, that's what I'm thinking of having. I've always wanted to keep poultry. . . . I don't forget I'm a farmer's daughter, for all the time I've spent in the hotel business. I could have kept some here, but Josiah couldn't abide them, and so I just 'ad to look forward to it. Oh, don't you look upset, James. I'll 'ave a companion, my cousin Katie. Josiah couldn't stand 'er, some'ow, so I never 'ad her here, but so I had that to look forward to also. I'll do well with the hens. . . . Perhaps I'll make a bit . . . just as I did something with the business here. Perhaps I'll be able to come and see you and Edith in my own gig. Think of that. I've often wanted a gig, only

Josiah he said what was the use? Yes, that's what I'll do with my little bit. I'm in a hurry, I am, to have that will read."

(To be Continued.)

"THE DOOR THAT ALWAYS OPENS."

"The Door that always opens" is the title of the latest illustrated booklet issued by Dr. Barnardo's Homes. It contains the life stories of a day's admissions told in a very readable fashion. Here is one of them:—

"In the dark hours comes little Teddie, found in the street at two o'clock in the morning, burning with fever. Not even Dr. Barnardo's Homes could save him, and we can see that he must die. But nobody could know how pitiful some of his last words would be. His good nurse kissed him like a mother. 'Why did you do that?' said the astonished boy; and then, 'Nobody—never—kissed—me—afore.'"

For nearly half a century the door of Dr. Barnardo's Homes has opened to all destitute children. Many of them come in a pitiable condition—afflicted, suffering and miserable. 78,000 children have passed through the Door, and the majority of them have been trained in various ways to take their places as useful citizens in the Homeland, and as supporters of the flag in the Dominions beyond the seas. But think for a moment what would have become of these boys and girls if they had not found a haven within the shelter of these Homes! Almost every hour of an ordinary working life some helpless child is struggling to reach the Door. It has never yet remained shut. But it is harder and harder to keep it open, and the cost of living is more and more. Half a sovereign will prop it open for a minute.

The Christmas season is approaching. Spare a little of your good cheer for the orphan and the homeless, the suffering and the sorrowful little people of our land. Gifts of all kinds, money, clothing, blankets, toys, etc., will be welcomed by the Honorary Director, Mr William Baker, M.A., LL.B., at headquarters, 18 to 26, Stepney Causeway, London, E.