



a bill of fare; but it was not hot, and we were so used to food, having had nothing to eat since a hearty noon meal, that the mere nourishment was comforting and helpful.

Then when we had finished the woman lighted two candles, and we arose and followed her to two reasonably comfortable rooms on the other side of the hall. After she had left us we set down at a table.

She sprung to her feet and she sang.

There was still a light in the sky, but the lamps were lighted in the hall. People were preparing for the night's journey. Men were reading the evening papers as though every moment was a consideration, and in a seat opposite a woman was trying to soothe a baby, while another little one clung to her, begging to be taken to her mother's breast.

"A pleasant hour for the night," I said to Margaret, in a voice much too flat and empty of emotion to be natural.

"They are almost dead with sleep now," said she, and in a moment what she said was true in her young, strong arms. The baby felt the change from the lax, nervous grasp of his mother, and burst into a crowling laugh, while the older child, interested, stopped weeping and joined in the merriment.

How did Margaret happen to have a sweet crackle in the shape of a horse in her pocket who abhorred "rhy flower"?

I think it came to her as all her other fairy gifts did, and it comforted more of us than the baby and the baby's brother. That horse came out and walked. It hid itself, jumped out of queer places, and was finally dissected and doled out in the most minute and everlasting parcels.

To see Margaret so full of resources did not surprise me. I was too much used to her fertility and freshness to wonder at it, but her light laugh, the firm gentleness with which she managed both mother and children, as though she had no other care nor thought, did make me realize that the unexpected is the woman.

I had fancied I should have to comfort and sustain her, but behold she was not only in good spirits, but she took it for granted that I should her resolute pushing back of fears that would awaken, and before the porter came to make the beds for the night I had ceased to worry.

I had not forgotten nor ignored Jack's tragedy, but I reserved my strength, and being a man healthy and tired, I slept all night and walked in the morning in good spirits and well rested.

But Margaret, cautioning now I went, listening and following the sounds, which grew more and more distinct, and yet not intelligible, when without expecting it I suddenly came upon a sight that made my heart almost stop beating, so terrified was I.

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