

WITH THE WOUNDED

*BE silent one moment, Sweetheart,
And listen: I know a place
(a stream with a meadow beside it)
Private and safe.*

*But her eyes see the city only
And the rush and the grey rain
And her sisters old and defeated
In shop and train.*

*BE silent one moment, Brothers,
And listen: I know a Man.
He comes in peace and with good tidings;
He has a plan.*

*But life goes by like a battle
(smoke and a muddle of gear)
While the shocked, grey columns of
wounded
Move to the rear.*

—S.P.L.

(continued from previous page)

course, Mrs. Robinson mightn't like her to take money, but she seems such a good-hearted woman, she . . . You think I'd better ask her then?

Yes, I do, Auntie. And I promise faithfully to come out each week-end and make sure he's all right.

The old lady began to mutter on to herself, forgetting her niece was there. Two months. And he's so old. It's cold in the winter, too. He's used to fires. Fourteen. Cats don't live much older than that. What if . . . two months . . . But maybe I'll pick up and be able to . . . what if he . . . she'd be kind to him, though, I'm sure. She's a nice little girl, and I'd give her some money . . . but what if . . .

Auntie! said the young woman sharply.

Miss Hutchins started and looked at her niece.

Auntie—you—have another cup of tea, she ended lamely.

Why, thank you, my dear, I think I will. We had a wearying day, to-day. I'm tired and I expect you are too. Fough! All those dirty places! Smelly! And cages—why . . .

Auntie—(pulling her back quickly)—you'll be ready to-morrow at three, then?

Yes.

You're sure you don't want me to stay overnight and help you pack?

Goodness me, no. There're only a few bits of things to put in a suitcase. No, my dear, there's no need for you to stay. You get back to your man and your babies. I'll manage nicely, thank you. And I'll be ready at three.

Late that night—after ten it was—a young man waiting for the bus by the wharf entrance watched curiously as an old lady, cradling a bundle in a sugar sack, came purposefully across the street and passed on to the wharf. Rather troubled, he decided to follow her—you never knew . . . But she only walked to the end of the wharf, knelt a little fearfully on the edge, and dropped her bundle over into the sea. She crouched there a few seconds, then, rising, walked uncertainly back to the road, passing the young man on her way without even noticing him.

Well, I'll be blowed, he muttered. Now what was she up to, I wonder?

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