

Mrs. Rather sat down, and folding
her hands-a thing she very seldom did-looked ruefully at the breakfast
table with its array of unwashed
dishes, at the pile of mending in her
work basket pear the wind win work basket near the window, and,
last and longest, at the heap of letters
in her lap. They were bills, every one of them;
oven the aristocratio-looking square white envelope, which no one could
have suspected of being a dun. held
the doctor's memorandum of the sum due "for profess"
past six months."
There were bills from the grocer,
from the butcher and the baker, the traditional candlestick-maker being
formidably represented by the gas
company with its quarterly statement. The total made her sick at heart.
Yet she had tried so hard to be
coonomical!-too .harl, she thought economical!--too hard, she thought
bitterly, as she remembered in her
secret soul that Johnnie's attack of pneumonia might have been averted
by tout rubber boots and by new and
warm under clothing in place of the warm under clothing in place of the
ld -flannels she had patched and darned d so faithfully.
The new gar
The new garments had to be par-
chased after all, in spite of her short sighted thrift. They were the Do-
tor's first prescription after the crisis
was past She thought, too, how, to save the
expense of a sick nurse, which they
could so oil afford, she had tried to to care for the sick boy day aud night,
at a time when her own physical sym-
fem called for rest. Of course, she lad broken down in the effort, with
the result that she, as well as Johniee
had to be nursed, and the doctor had wo patients instead
of make such mi
then.
Well, th, th
over spilt pose, so she went for any sot ser hat had bur-
with willing hands. There was one thing she could do,
if only John could be made to consent. The new cloak, which made
such a heavy item in Draper © De
Lane's bill, and which John had given her for Christmas, could be returned.
She had not worn it, and its par-
chase had been conditional on her apJohn, who, as every one will under-
stand, was her husband, Mr. Rather-
was a bookkeeper ins downtown store was a bookkeeper in a downtown store,
with a salary which sacredly sufficed,
with strict economy, to buy bread and
butt tor lethe butter, clot
little family.
Still they crate bank account, and this was the hand. But while she was sick there
had been no one to watch and guard had been no one to watch and guard
against all possible l leaks, ard the gro-
cory bill was double what it ought to henry bin was double what it ought to
have been. As for generous, warm.
hearted John, he had never stopped to count dollars, much less pennies, with
his wife and boy lying ill, the house had been kept like an oven, and the
amount of coal and gas used had been frightful.
She tho
again thro gain through the long day, again there
was small wonder if her children found her absent-minded more than
once. That sum total haunted her like
a nightmare, and for the first time in her life she dreaded her husband's
coming. because of the burden of care which awaited him.
She put the hateful envelopes out of
sight-at least he should eat his supper in peace and comfort-and made
the children tidy for their father's homecoming. The fact that New
Year's is a 1 legal holiday in no wise
shortened his day's work the books
must be posted before taking account must be
of stock.
It was she hard the sound of his lat eh key
in the look of the front door, and she hastened to hurry up supper, as the
children rushed pelt mell to welcome their father. He came in smiling. as
usual, the e enter a small tumult of
ort
 member." "I think they might have let you of evasively.
"Impossible, my dear," he replied,
"why this is the very busiest part of $\underset{\substack{\text { my year, } \\ \text { woman } \\ \text { "I ought to, by this time," she said. }}}{ }$ with a sorry attempt at a la laugh; "lout
couldn't help hoping, all the same;
come, supper is ready." come. supper is ready.
Both Mr. Ruth er hand her husband
had long azo tacitly agreed to surren
der to the children the first hour or so had long a yo tacitly agreed to surren-
der to the ehildrenen the first hour or so
after his return every evening. It was
the "children's hour," and unless
there chanced to be company at teal
the the "children's hour," and unless
there chanced to be company at tea.
all conversation in which they could
not take part was postponed until
att er their early bedtime.


 | him |
| :---: |
| Fun |
| "I |
| mon |
| mon |
| hour |
| ion | ton, and the rent of the house associa

the purchase money the has paid five
hundred on it, and the rent now is $\$ 15$
a month." a month.
Is that
than this,

 it at cost. He gives me the refusal ,
a week, which is very good of him."
"And you are going to take it?", sly
asked eagerly. "I thin
Mr Bar
Building
trouble
place.
and It
manage
have the
hare the
The
nome
and ness added comedo, with a resh bitter-
the pile brought out ton, whine he examined thempera-
fact that she was only indirectly re re
sponsible for the size of the bills in no

 have worn it you responsible, my
eDo I hod
dear? Who bought the cloak, you or
If If that were all, I could manage.
As it is, I can pay the bills, but the
house must be given up, and it really
is such a chance as comes once in a is such
lifeti
Mr
was Mrs. Rather made no answer, she
was crying quietly behind the news-
paper which she aha p pecked up and
was holding in front of her to hide her
tears. tears.
Hare husband began figuring on the
back of one of the envelopes; it was a
way he had when worried.
Presently she way he had when worried.
Presently she let fall the paper, with
a half smothered exclamation, and
rushed out of the rushed out of the room and upstairs.
He scarcely noticed the circumstance
-it was a common' one--probably she ina mas a common one--probaby she
imagined she heard the baby cry or
Johnnie cough.
In a very few min-
 "Take it, John! take it! it really is
-now you can pay the bills and take
the house too!-oh, I am so clad! glad"!" she sobbed incoherently.
Mr. Rather was no numisma feared that his wife halt he hest her mind id.
fit cost him no small effort at self-con-
tron to draw her gently to him, and of his effort--"What do you mean, my
darling?"
"Why?
 He took the coin and examined it
critically
 her hurry she had left lying whet
she had dropped it, on the floor.
"Listen," and in tones that quiver
 it to cut a hoy ole in it, and let lot an, an he in
should do, lest I should lose

 Nom Ina sours man 1




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