

"My Trusted Servant."

By MISS M. LOANE.

Mrs. Taylor had never been one of our patients: she belonged to a species of angel in whom it is now the fashion to disbelieve, "the born nurse." The district owed much to her, but the only payment demanded, and that at long intervals, was that I should listen to her "reminiscences," to which category the following story belongs.

"It was the last place I took before me and Taylor was married. I was only there six months, but the goings on was so queer that I seem to remember as much about it as if it was half my life. I went there with an eight years' character, and the old lady took to me from the first, as far as she'd ever take to a woman, for she was all for the gentlemen, and always had been. Eighty-four, and a perfect old dear to look at, I used to say to 'em when they was a-grumbling about this and that and the other that she'd said and she'd done, or she hadn't, 'It's just her complaint,' I used to say, 'and you've no call to take any notice.' 'Cook,' they used to say, 'If you'd been here as long as we have you'd love her as little,' and there was no gainsaying them she was a tartar.

"Me and her maid who used to wait on her and write her letters was the only women, but there was a butler and a coachman, and a man to help in the stable, and three gardeners. The house was just enormous, the kind of place people go to on bank holidays, but every inch carpeted. The pictures, why Royalty used to come and look at 'em!

"I had a deal of cooking to do, but it was nearly all for ourselves. The old lady would never touch anything but a bit of plain fish, or maybe a bird, but it was as hard to get half-a-day's outing as if there'd been ten to cook for in the dining-room. Sometimes I'd say 'Could you spare me for the afternoon, ma'am, I'd enjoy to take a walk.' 'Certainly not,' she'd say, 'you're far to fond of gallivanting,' but if the men wanted everything of her it was a different tale!

"Every afternoon the butler and the coachman would carry her downstairs to go for a drive. I'd always be in the hall to see her start. 'Crowther,' she'd say every time, as reg'lar as clockwork, 'bolt the door and draw down the blinds, and if anyone comes say I'm out.' In ten minutes she'd be back again.

William,' she'd say to the coachman, 'give the horses a nice hot mash; they need it after such a long run,' and then she'd tell me to give both men hot grog for fear they'd caught cold!

"Once we had a terrible to-do with the maid,

She said the old lady had insulted her until she could *not* stop for no legacy nor limbaney neither, so she was given a quarter's wages and off she went. I begged her to stop for I knew we'd be lost without her, every mortal bit of the old lady's clothes locked up, and only she knowing which key unlocked which, and having managed all the correspondence for years, but she wouldn't listen; she said nothing 'ud make her come back unless the mistress 'ud beg her pardon—and of course that's a dreadful thing to expect a lady to do. Well, I struggled on for the best part of a week, but it was night and day and more than I could stand, so I sent for the doctor to tell him how things stood—I didn't like to have any dealings with the lawyer—and I sent for the maid. He was awfully put out when he heard she had walked off with a quarter's wages, and he said 'I don't know that I'm right in letting you come back, but if there's any good in you at all you must be better than a stranger.' So he walked upstairs and I followed, and the maid came behind, as sulky as you please. The old lady sat up in bed looking a perfect picture in a white silk shawl, and her hair done the way I liked it, and d'reckly she set eyes on the maid she said as nice as could be, 'Janet, I'm glad you've come back, and I'll be still more glad if you'll stay.' And, of course, she did, and began doing her hair the way *she* liked and fetching out a pink shawl before the doctor was well out of the room.

"Ten days after the old lady died, and then the heir came, and everyone except me was in a fuss to know what they'd get,—I knew there hadn't been any will made since I came, though I'd heard she gen'ally made three a year. Well, the maid had five hundred pounds and all the clothes, which she sold for a good bit, and the butler had two thousand, William had fifteen hundred pounds, and the horses was left to him under promise that he'd shoot 'em then and there. I was the most contented of the lot, for the heir gave me a year's wages and two good suits of black, and he said there was one honest person in the house. Him and his wife would have taken me on at their other house, but I'd promised Taylor I'd never take another place. We'd been waiting twelve years already, and when we looked back neither of us could make out why.

"William from the first moment behaved queer. With all that money, and meaning to marry the maid and give up work, what did he do but go and ask the heir for a new livery hat! 'No,' says he, 'I've got the unpaid bill for your last one. That's enough for me.' The way William went on about that hat you wouldn't

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