

The house was in a terrible state of disorder, having, apparently, never been touched since its mistress lay down, which Mabel learned was about three weeks ago.

Her husband was away at the pit, she said, and the little boy who had brought Mabel was her eldest child. An infant of about four months old slept beside her, and two other children of about two and three years of age respectively sprawled on the floor, screaming with all the strength of their united lungs.

After speaking for a few minutes to the poor woman, Mabel decided that she could do nothing until the noise was stopped, and after many unsuccessful efforts, at last had the satisfaction of seeing the two drop off to sleep, thoroughly exhausted with crying. She then turned her attention to the sick woman, whom she found to be in a very weak state indeed. She told Mabel that the doctor had visited her that morning, and had thought it his duty to tell her that she had only a very few days more to live.

Mabel hardly knew what to do, or what to say, but at last suggested, that perhaps she would like to see Mr. Chadwell or the missionary, as she gathered from her conversation that she was in great spiritual distress.

“Oh, no,” sighed the poor creature, “I daren’t have any of them here. The missionary was here once, and it was the words he spoke that first set me thinking. He left me a book too, that was full of good things, but my husband burned it when he came home, and the priest said if he ever came here again my eyes would never look on the blessed Virgin.” She