

**SHEILA AND OTHERS; THE  
SIMPLE ANNALS OF AN  
UNROMANTIC  
HOUSEHOLD**

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Sheila and others; the simple annals of an unromantic household by Winifred Cotter

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**WINIFRED COTTER**

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# SHEILA AND OTHERS

*The Simple Annals of an  
Unromantic Household*

BY

WINIFRED COTTER

*Melina Coleman*



NEW YORK

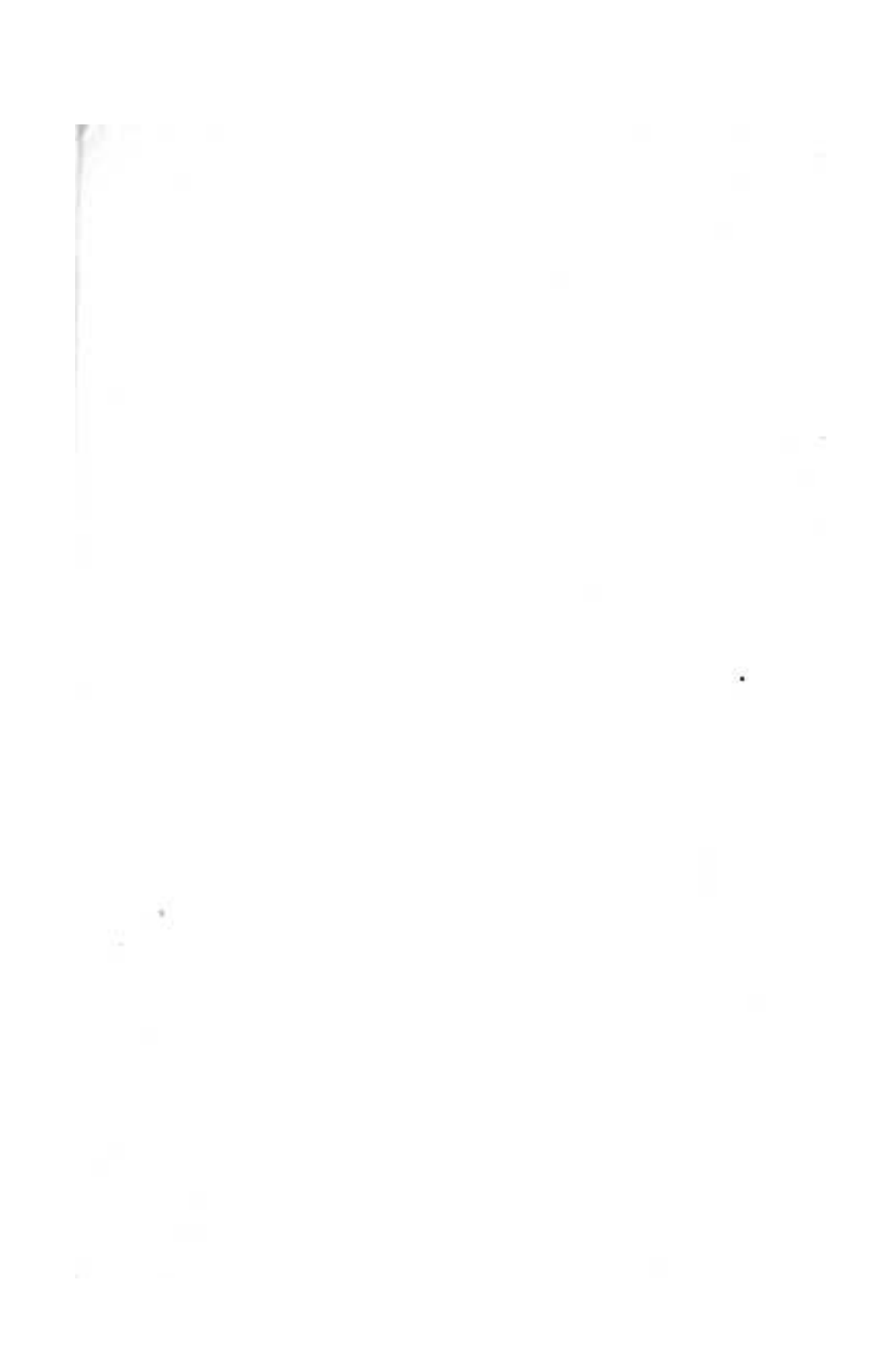
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**SHEILA AND OTHERS**





## SHEILA

**A** TOUCH of wistful warmth comes to my heart when I think of Sheila, blue-eyed, bright-haired, Irish Sheila, flushed with the adventure of foreign travel, and all unapprised of the toils that wait in Canadian kitchens to take the feet of the unwary immigrant.

At first she was but a name on a list, one of ten the W. H. H. S. experimented with, advancing the passage money, and "placing" in carefully chosen homes. At least that was how the enthusiastic President of the W. H. H. S. expressed it, and naturally I was flattered to be among the chosen. The name looked promising to me. I built fresh hopes upon it. I pictured a bright young face and an ardent, responsive spirit, with marginal decorations of toast for breakfast of a golden brown hue instead of murky black. And I wasn't far wrong—at least in regard to the first two points. My heart warmed to the

twinkly-eyed, frank young girl who presented herself at our door one fine morning with her hat askew and an over-worked "grip" in her hand.

She smiled confidently, and explained that she'd got on, the wrong tram, but the man had been that friendly, Mem. She called me "Mem" from the first, and the Irish brogue of her was music to the ear. She was but eighteen, eager and ready for new worlds to conquer, but had never been in a real kitchen before. I must say my own ardor was damped by this admission, but not hers.

"I'll soon be larnin' how youse like it done, Mem," she would say with cheerful non-chalance.

We were in charge (I almost wrote "grip") at the moment, of a highly accomplished, serious-minded Lady-help of English extraction and lofty connection, who had studied French in Paris and Household Science in New York. She was now getting her "practical" experience in before going on West to let her light shine before a more appreciative and larger-pursed circle of admirers. She was fearfully competent. Our domicile had undergone a unique transformation. The corners

in the dim twilight of the attic-stairs had been penetrated with a meat-skewer, the grooves in the hardwood paneling of the bathroom, ditto, and even the superannuated jelly glasses in the cellar's remotest depths had been investigated and "wiped down."

Relays of charwomen had been at work upon us for some time under the manipulation of this energetic lady and we were all worn out, particularly the instigator of these reforms herself, who was of the angular, nervous type, and in whose presence I experienced a sense of guilt, whether because of her pale cheek or the product of the skewer on the back stairs, I cannot say. I suffered from an uneasy sense that things weren't as they should be in Canada, and that I was implicated. Of course I was contrite, but I don't think it helped any.

I had long entertained views, previous to this, on the subject of the dignity of domestic labor and had publicly expressed the conviction that ladies engaged in such work should not be debarred the privileges of ladies. Feeling obliged to live up to these principles, in the present experiment, I had a place set at the family board for the experimentee, who