

REBIRTH
By Clarence Stroud

"But I could never have made her happy!"

The words rang in the child's ears as if some one had spoken them. He sat up in his cot trembling with fear of the unknown. The dark was terrifying. He screamed.

Then footsteps sounded in the room, a blaze of light was switched on and a pair of loving arms encircled him and drew his head down to a warm breast.

"What was the matter, honey?"

"I don't know, mummy," he stammered.

Gradually the sobs subsided. After a while the little boy seemed to sleep. But he was not asleep; his little brain was working hard and trying to remember.

He knew that he loved his mother beyond all power of words and thoughts. He was a good child, docile, obedient, the pride of both his parents. John and Margaret Milrand had been married 12 years before the boy came to them. At first they had not been altogether happy. Margaret had been engaged before to Alfred Symons, who was killed in the railroad wreck a week before his wedding day. Margaret had been heartbroken.

It was three years before she could bring herself to listen to John Milrand's addresses. But she knew that it is absurd to devote all one's life to grief for the dead. She had a woman's desire for children. She told John frankly that she could never love him as she should.

"I will teach you to love me, dear," said John.

So they were married. But they were not happy until the boy came. John had failed in his endeavor, and he knew that Margaret wept for her dead lover in secret. However, he was good to her, and with the tardy

birth of the boy a new affection seemed to grow up between them.

It seemed indeed to Margaret that this new tie to life had put the past out of her mind. Once she awakened to the realization that her dead lover was forgotten. At first she blamed herself for her forgetfulness, and then she was glad. The past was past, and Alfred must take his place with all that had been before John Milrand came into her life.

Alfred Symons did not know he was dead for several days after the



"Yes, Dear," said Margaret.

fatality. His mind had been full of the approaching meeting with his sweetheart and of the wedding. Then he was conscious of the sudden, awful shock—and blankness followed, so far as external conditions were concerned.

But his mind, which is not of the brain, though it works through the brain, was ceaselessly at work. He lived, if the term may be used of a disembodied entity, in a state of delirium. He did not know who he was