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AUTHOR OF "FIVE LITTLE PEPPERS, AND HOW THEY GREW," "OLD CONCORD: HER HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS," "A LITTLE MAID OF CONCORD TOWN," "WHITTIER WITH THE CHILDREN," ETC.

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To all who love simplicity, truth, and cheerfulness

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ONE

THE atmosphere was charged, so to speak, with such solid satisfaction when Miss Sally Plunkett emerged from the humble dwelling of the justice of the peace as Mrs. Abijah Tubbs, that it seemed the controlling element for the whole countryside.

It had been "up and early" to get their work done, with all the neighbours who meant to be present at the virgin attractions of Miss Sally's entry into Justice Spender's office, and it was "get there quick" also with all the small boys and smaller girls who had counted on the show ever since the engagement was announced. For Miss Sally had in the short time

between her betrothal and its consummation in marriage, made diligent use of all possible verbal channels to spread the information as to every detail of her union with the man of her choice.

"I ain't got much time to git ready in, an' that's a fact, but if I wait, I won't nerve him up to it again, most likely, an' it's better to git a husband than to have more clothes an' fixin's. Mrs. Tubbs — won't that sound grand, though!"

She tossed her head, at that moment trying on the wedding bonnet, a splendid affair, with its bright green ostrich feather observing the correct angle; its wreath of pink roses, and the final glory of its long, white cotton veil of a sprawling pattern that till that day had reposed as a curtain on the shelf of the village storekeeper.

"Ain't I just delicious!" stalking back and forth in front of the big, cracked Plunkett looking-glass.

"I wish to goodness 'twas to-day an' I was sure an' fast Mrs. Tubbs. You never can be pos'tive about these men. My! sech a' sight o' trouble as I've had to land 'Bijah! An' he not much bigger'n a pint cup. But then, he's a man, an' I'll be a merried woman 's much as if he was sizable like other folks. Then, says I, see 'em bow an' say, 'Good mornin', Mrs. Tubbs.'"

She courtesied to the right and to the left, in response to these future salutations, the green feather waving in unison and the sprawling figures of the cotton lace veil making a brave show on either side of her spare, autumnal figure.

"Sally, what do you want to git merried fer?" her intimate friend and neighbour, the widow Panks, asked when the sudden news of the matrimonial intentions of Miss Plunkett thrilled the entire community. "We know 'Bijah Tubbs don't have nothin' to do with gittin' it up."

"No," said Sally, calmly, "he don't; not a mite. An' such a sight o' trouble as I've had, Mis' Panks, to bring him round to it." She leaned her long arms on the top rail of the fence dividing their dwellings, and gazed into the widow's face opposite for a chance gleam of sympathy.

"You must 'a' had," assented Mrs. Panks, filliping a belated ant from the rail with a red forefinger; "but why on earth couldn't you 'a' let him alone, Sally? 'Bijah hain't never hurt no one, an' he'd ought to be let to go his own way."

"Well, he ain't goin' to be let alone," declared Sally, "an' I'm goin' to be Mrs. Tubbs. We'll be merried Sat'day at Justice Spender's. You tell everybody, Mis' Panks — there ain't no time fer me to go round an' invite folks. Say, I want 'em to be out on the road an' see us go in, an' afterward we'll all march, 'Bijah an' me — Mrs. Tubbs — at top, in percession to my

house, an' I'll have cake an' lem'nade set out fer a treat."

It was impossible to interrupt this announcement, for it gushed out with such jubilant force.

"*Sat'day!*" screamed the widow when she got her breath. "Why, it's only Thursday, to-day, Sally Plunkett!"

"I know; we'd been merried to-morrow, but fer that. A Friday — my sakes! — it's bad enough to have 'Bijah Tubbs fer life, without no more calamities."

"What in the world did you take up with him fer, anyway, Sally?" demanded Mrs. Panks.

"Because I couldn't be a merried woman without him," said Miss Plunkett, bringing her pale green eyes fully to bear on her friend in astonishment at the question.

"P'r'aps some one else would 'a' happened along, Sally," observed Mrs. Panks, casting a deep line of thought in her mind. "You

ain't but forty-eight, an' if you'd 'a' waited, you — "

"Yes, I be; forty-nine last Washin'ton's birthday," interrupted the bride-elect. "I tell you, I ain't a-goin' to wait till I'm fifty; an', besides, 'Bijah might die, an' then where'd I be? I couldn't never be Mrs. Tubbs." Her long, spare cheek turned pale at the thought; and Mrs. Panks ducked her round face to escape the righteous indignation that leaped from Miss Plunkett's eyes.

"Well, somebody else might 'a' come along," she repeated by way of soothing.

"No, they wouldn't. There ain't a mite o' use in your standin' there an' tellin' me that, Nancy Panks, an' you know it. 'Bijah is my only chance, an' I've took him, 'cause I ain't goin' to be an' old maid, an' I will be if I strike fifty unmerried. An', besides, when I die, I'm goin' to have 'relict' on my tomb. I've just set my heart on that."

"You may be took first," observed Mrs. Panks, dryly.

"P'r'aps so; there ain't no use in opposin' th' Lord's will, an' you know me, Nancy, that I ain't one that wants to. But I'll be Mrs. Tubbs, — the beloved wife of Abijah Tubbs, — so my tombstone is goin' to look nice, any way you fix it. Well, you all be there at nine o'clock Sat'day mornin' sharp."

"It's a pity 'Bijah ain't a leetle grain nearer your size, Sally," said Mrs. Panks, her small black eyes roving up and down the long, angular frame before her.

"I don't feel no call to be complainin' o' Providence that He didn't make 'Bijah bigger," observed Miss Plunkett. "I'm thankful enough fer half a loaf if I can't git a whole one; an' that th' Lord give me th' opportunity o' gittin' 'Bijah at all. So you be sure you tell all the folks. Land sakes, an' here I stand an' my weddin' fixin's not begun!"

"Don't you want me to help you make your cake, Sally?" asked Mrs. Panks, itching for the revelations of the little three-roomed cottage, that such an intimate association in work might unfold.

"No, I don't," declared Miss Sally, shortly, "an' you ain't a-goin' to catch a squint at my weddin' gown an' bunnit, nor so much as a pinhead of nothin' till you see me start fer th' justice's. You needn't think it, Nancy."

"I wasn't a-thinkin' o' that, Sally," began Mrs. Panks, much offended.

"Oh, yes, you were; but all the same you don't do it. I tell you how you may help if you want to. You git your young ones to pick a lot o' daisies an' green things an' bring here. I'm a-goin' to have a merriage bell in my parlour to stand under, 'Bijah an' me, when we git home an' you all come up to say, 'How do you do, Mrs. Tubbs?'" She made such a marvellous

courtesy, picking up each side of her blue checked gown, that Mrs. Panks stood on tiptoe to peer over the fence railing to view the whole performance.

"I can't never do that, Sally," she gasped; "I sh'd tumble on my nose."

"Do the best you can," counselled Miss Plunkett, coming up to her own height serenely; "th' Lord never intended any one to do more, I guess. An' a tub must roll, I s'pose, to th' end of its days. Well, good-by; remember an' git them flowers; it's the last request of Sally Plunkett," and she disappeared within her virgin dwelling.

The desire for this floral display, along with all the other details of Miss Plunkett's courtship and coming marriage, spreading to all quarters, naturally was exploited in the corridors and on the piazzas of the village inn, filled with its usual quota of summer boarders. Some of them had known

Miss Plunkett for many seasons, as she had the reputation of doing up shirt waists better than any other village woman. The innkeeper fanned the flame of curious inquiry set going by Miss Sally's conquest, and gladly dished up all the gossip of the place. Old Ira Plunkett, stern, hard-fisted, and hard-headed, had yet such a code of morals as prevented him from taking advantage of the evident desire of his father, who didn't have the ability to express it clearly in his will, that Ira should have the farm. The lawyers easily made this fact apparent. Ira would have none of it if there was a quibble to which his good-for-nothing brother Abram, many years his junior, could hitch an objection. He dropped the farm where he had toiled as a slave till his fortieth year, like a hot potato, so to speak, and with his daughter (his wife had died some years before) retired to a cabin on the village edge, from

which he saw his brother sell the old farm at auction, pocket the gains, cursing because they were not larger, and depart without a farewell word, to lose himself in the big world.

Ira Plunkett shut his mouth fast and uttered no syllable while he "buckled to" and did jobs for the farmers and got on somehow. And Sally scraped and pinched; and here after thirty years she was eking out a scanty living by washing for the summer boarders.

"I tell you, sir," — the innkeeper would bring his hand down smartly on the guests' registry book, while detailing the story to some after-dinner smoker, — "Ira Plunkett's heart was clean broke all that twenty year (he died some ten year back). I used to see him a-standin' on th' edge of th' south medder many a Sunday afternoon, — an Irishman bought th' farm; didn't know how to work it, sold off th' best part,

and th' rest of course all ran down at th' heel, — an' such a look on th' old man's face! An' as soon as he see me, he'd step up, an' begin talkin' about th' sermon, an' th' weather, an' th' crops, an' th' Lord knows what all. An' you'd think he owned th' whole town, to see how ca'm he was."

"What about Miss Sally?" queried the boarder; "she's a character, isn't she?"

"I sh'd say," responded Boniface. "Well, Sally took care of her father. I guess, with all his ca'mness, he warn't none too easy to manage; an' th' last few years of th' old man's life he was bedrid, an' died hard, — that was ten year ago, as I said before, — an' she had an awful tough time."

"Well, I'm glad she's going to have happiness at last," observed the boarder, lightly.

The innkeeper grinned. "Yes, she'll be Mrs. Tubbs — an' that's enough fer her; she hates an old maid like p'isen."

"Is this Mr. Tubbs a fair sort of man, Mr. Barlow?" propounded the summer guest.

Mr. Barlow whistled. "Well, you can't 'xactly call him a man, bein' he's about big enough for a good half o' one. Why, he's just 'Bijah Tubbs. Hain't you seen him about here, Mr. Russell?"

No; Mr. Russell could not call to mind any one who had been designated in his presence by that cognomen.

"Sho — is that so? I thought everybody knew 'Bijah. He's a stand-by in Hillsboro; his father an' gran'father lived an' died here; his fambly's good. But bein' small, he hain't had no call to git up an' git, I s'pose, an' so he just does odd jobs. But he's always to church stiddy as Sunday comes, an' puts five cents in th' contribution box; I know, 'cause I take one round. An' some other folks with bustin' big farms hain't souls above pennies." Mr. Barlow's

rubicund countenance glowed deeper in scorn.

Mr. Russell, with the thought of suggesting to his wife that the ladies should get up a good "send-off" for Miss Plunkett, was turning away, when Mr. Barlow called out, "Here's 'Bijah now! he's comin' to git th' mail bag."

A little spare man, who was made less in height by a deprecating stoop of the shoulders, shambled up the inn steps and along the piazza. It was impossible to see his eyes, for they were downcast and overshadowed by the brim of his straw hat dragged well down over them. The lower part of his small, thin countenance being obscured by his collar, into which it had slunk, not much advantage could be gained by any attempt to compass his face.

Mr. Russell went out and met him, to say pleasantly, "Good morning."

"Mornin'," said Mr. Tubbs.

"Do you think we are going to have rain?" Mr. Russell filliped the ashes carelessly from his cigar end and glanced at the clouds.

"We may an' we may not," said Mr. Tubbs. "I d'no."

"I trust it will not rain to-morrow, on your wedding day. And let me congratulate you, Mr. Tubbs. I hear nothing but good of Miss Plunkett."

A look of abject terror possessed the little man. "It's dretful hard on me." He shook all over.

"She is such a good woman," said the summer boarder, reassuringly. "You are lucky to get her."

"She would have it so," cried Mr. Tubbs, who in his misery seemed delighted to talk. "She's ben at me fer years. An' I told her 'No' every time."

"Well, I am sure it is better for you to be married. You will have some one to take care of you."

"I don't want to be took care of." He almost snarled it out. "I was well enough, if she'd only let me alone."

"They say she is a fine cook," observed the gentleman, carelessly. "She must be, judging from some specimens of her work when she helped Mrs. Barlow the other day."

Abijah Tubbs's little pale eyes gleamed. "That's th' only part that suits me about th' hull thing," he said at last.

"Now you must make her happy, Mr. Tubbs," said the summer boarder, with a keen glance. "The ladies are all very fond of Miss Plunkett. She's a good soul, and you must make her a good husband."

"She might 'a' let me alone," said Abijah, returning to the charge, all his terrors fresh upon him at the word "husband." And the landlord shaking the mail bag at him from the doorway, he shuffled off with it.

"What shall we get her?" The girls crowded around Violet Van Wyck on the

veranda steps of the inn. The young men poured into her hands the collection they had taken up.

"Spoons — spoons!" declared Violet. "It's the dearest wish of her heart to possess real silver spoons."

"Except to be Mrs. Tubbs," some one cried out.

"Here's a five-dollar bill!" cried one of the girls, poking in the heap of money. "Oh — and a ten!"

"That's from Mr. Russell," said Charley Van Wyck, balancing himself on the piazza railing. "I collected that —"

"Thirty-one dollars and seventy-five cents," announced Violet. "Oh — oh! there's enough for both! Mrs. Russell and mamma give the cake and lemonade, you know."

"Both what?" cried the group.

"I heard her say once she'd give anything to have a 'Pilgrim's Progress,' full

of pictures, on her centre-table. Now, one of you must go into town this afternoon and buy it."

"Charles Augustus, it's up to you," cried one of the men.

"Not much!" declared Charles Augustus, dangling his feet from the railing.

"Oh, come on, Mr. Van Wyck," cried Bessie Beach, rushing up to him. "A lot of us will go with you. It will be such a lark."

But Charles Augustus still surveyed them all calmly from his perch, protesting he wouldn't go one inch.

"Only one must go," declared Violet. "The rest of us have to make the marriage bell. We are going to carry it over to her in the morning, you know."

"No one seems to volunteer," observed Charles Augustus, dryly.

Miss Van Wyck did not look at any one in particular, but consulted the little tablet on

her chatelaine. A young man on the edge of the circle seemed to feel some subtile summons, however, for he said presently, "I'll go; any other commands for the town?" and was well repaid as she lifted her blue eyes, albeit the fun over the "marriage bell" would be lost to Richard Blair.

"Sally, ain't you 'feared he won't come at all?" It was an awful whisper the widow Panks emitted, and distinctly recognisable to all the company assembled in Miss Sally's yard. It was five minutes past nine o'clock Saturday morning.

"Nancy Panks, ye *are* a fool!" said the bride-elect. Then she craned her long neck to search the roadway.

"I'll go after him," screamed Johnny Panks, eagerly, "I'll go!" More than one young man boarder volunteered to corral the bridegroom.

"Much obleeged," said Sally with a pleasant bow, the cotton lace veil sweeping the

ground. "Johnny Panks, you take care o' your ma, an' wait till you're spoken to before you git presumptious. It's best fer me to go myself." She plucked up her gown on either side, and stalked off toward the miserable little shanty her prospective husband called home.

Left behind, the guests invited to join the wedding procession had nothing to do but to watch her as long as the nature of the road permitted. Sally's chief ambition being the wedding veil and the bonnet from which it depended, there had been little time to spend on the wedding gown, and still less money. "What odds?" she said to herself happily, "th' veil's th' main thing; an' it's big-flowered, so th' most el'gant frock in th' world wouldn't show through much."

She therefore brought forth her best gown, a red merino. She had packed it away in camphor against the moths, and

now brushed it up carefully again. It was a very hot day, but that made no difference in the contentment with which she viewed it. The bonnet worn for so many seasons that she had forgotten to count them, delighted her beyond expression. "It's perfectly beautiful," she cried again and again as she surmounted it with the veil and placed upon that the bright pink wreath of roses and the green feather. "I sh'd never know 'twarn't brand new."

She now stepped forth as we have seen, if not with happy, at least with determined footsteps, and just as hope was beginning to be abandoned by the wedding party, appeared over the brow of the hill. Abijah Tubbs was with her.

"All right," announced Sally, on regaining them. "Come, 'Bijah, you an' me must go first."

Mrs. Panks and family marched next to Miss Plunkett and Mr. Tubbs, as befitted

the great intimacy for years over the well-worn fence. At the last minute there was a commotion in the widow's brood, and little Susan rushed forth and ran to Sally. "I'm goin' with you," she piped, and clutched the wedding veil.

There was an awful pause, broken by the shout from the dismayed widow: "Come back, Susan. Oh, my land o' liberty!"

"I'll bring her," volunteered again Johnny.

Sally started when the sacrilegious hand was laid on her wedding veil, looked down with a black frown on her brow, to see two tears rolling off small Susan's cheeks and her underlip quivering. She was the child whom Miss Plunkett had helped pull through the scarlet fever.

"Let her alone," she said grimly, "'twon't be so impressive likely, but Susan's comin' with me. There, child, you mus'n't take holt o' my veil ; that ain't proper."

She untwisted the little grimy fingers. Susan immediately grasped the red merino gown, and wiped her tears on its front breadth.

It wasn't quite like a circus procession, because there weren't really any wild animals, if we except the irrepressible small boy furnished alike by Hillsboro and the summer-boarder element. Some of the young men of the inn contingent would have equalled their endeavours; but Miss Violet Van Wyck, failing to discover any great amount of fun in unseemly proceedings, the procession moved onward with much decorum.

When they all halted at Justice Spender's, Miss Plunkett turned around, telling 'Bijah to do the same. Little Susan whirled with her, still clinging to her gown.

"I can't ask all o' you to go in," said Sally. "My! Mis' Spender'd be crazy at our trackin' up her floor, even if ye could

git in. But I want some witnesses, so I s'pose, Nancy Panks, I'll have to ask you an' your fam'ly, to save th' peace. An' there's Miss Vi'let, I couldn't never be merried without her; an' her ma, an' her pa — I want them."

"I wish I'd treated the old girl with attention," groaned Charley Van Wyck.

"An' Mr. Barlow; 'tain't proper to leave him out, 'cause Mr. Tubbs has carried th' mail bag so long; an' I want Mis' Barlow. Well, I guess that's enough."

Although there were several candidates to her favour, who considered they had claims, and thereby endeavoured to press them, Miss Plunkett closed debate, marshalled in Mr. Tubbs, who was now trembling visibly and it seemed to him very audibly; the lucky ones invited to the ceremony followed, and the little justice closed the door.

Miss Plunkett emerged as Mrs. Tubbs,

her long face wreathed in smiles. Mr. Tubbs, by whom up to the last moment hopes of final escape had been indulged, now sank into a settled despair that bent his little body and drooped his neck.

"He ought to have used wool soap," observed one of the irreverent young men, "see how he's shrunk!"

They had been married with the ring, Sally insisting on that. She had instructed Mr. Tubbs all about it on the engagement day before starting on their way to get the marriage license; and exhibited, after much unrolling of tissue paper, a broad golden circlet that just fitted her toil-worn finger.

"I bought it a good many years ago, 'Bijah, so 's to have it ready in case I did git a husband. An' I'm sure 'tain't fair to 'xpect you'd buy one, when you don't want to git merried."

"No, I don't," said the truthful 'Bijah.

"An' so it's all ready," observed the

bride-elect, cheerfully. "Now when Justice Spender stops fer you to put it on my finger, I'll give ye a nudge, so ye can't help but understand."

The ring now shone brightly on Mrs. Tubbs's hand, from the finger devoted to that purpose. The Panks children told afterward that Mr. Tubbs dropped it twice; there had been much scuffling into corners after it. At last it was safely installed as sign and symbol of the union of Tubbs and Plunkett.

"An' now all foller in percession to my house," cried Mrs. Tubbs from the Spender doorstep. "Me an' my husband, Mr. Tubbs, will stan' under th' merriage bell an' give you a reception with cake an' lem'nade. No, no, Nancy Panks," the widow's family all crowding to get next to the newly married pair, "'tain't proper fer you to march first after us goin' back. Justice Spender, seein' he's made us one, an' his wife, must go next. Come, Justice; come, Mis' Spender."

The widow could not conceal her vexation, and took pains to inform her next neighbour that she never "see such an insult; an' I'd much drather 'a' been first after Mis' Tubbs than first after Sally Plunkett." And she should take her children out of the procession and go home cross lots. Hearing which, Mrs. Tubbs turned her head enough to say, "Don't be a fool, Nancy!"

This old-time counsel struck so familiarly upon the unwonted excitement that Mrs. Panks swallowed her desperate resolve, and arrived at the bride's home quite cooled off. Her spirits were further upborne by the invitation from Mrs. Tubbs to preside over the lemonade pail.

It had been thought best, considering the limitations of the cottage, to have the refreshments outside. The clotheslines, the usual and absorbing features of Sally's yard, had been taken down; and the tubs were

utilised by turning them upside down on the bench beside the door, to lay a long board across them. On this were set the pail of lemonade, and a motley array of cups and glasses borrowed from all the houses not exempt by distance. To collect them, Johnny Panks had been hired by promises of a large number of pieces of wedding cake and a corresponding number of glasses of lemonade; and he did the job by means of Sally's cart, in which the washing for the inn boarders was collected and returned. Mrs. Barlow served the cake from Sally's ironing table brought out from the kitchen.

The stream of callers passing into the parlour to salute the bride and groom under the marriage bell were carefully instructed by Sally to march around the centre-table and see the presents. The real silver spoons were set upon its polished surface, like the spokes of a wheel; the illustrated "Pilgrim's Progress" in the middle.

"I never see anythin' so nice," said Mrs. Tubbs, beaming on them all; "there ain't nothin' more on earth fer me to wish fer;— Mr. Tubbs, you must give folks your right hand to shake."

A murmur went around that the parson was coming. With great dignity he and Mrs. Elwood in her well-preserved black silk gown advanced from the road into the Plunkett yard. Just at this juncture, Mrs. Panks, much elated that the parson and his wife should see her social prominence behind the lemonade table, forgot to issue those incessant commands to her offspring to "keep away, or I'll spank you when I git you to home!" She turned to effusively greet the distinguished visitors,— Johnny Panks seized the supreme moment and lunged at the pail to help himself,— one of the small brothers having been promised the first cupful when it should be time for the Panks household to be served,

threw himself with righteous indignation upon the interloper — over went the pail, and although Mrs. Elwood received some of the lemonade, it afforded her no pleasure, for the most of it fell upon her best and only silk gown.

The confusion of this episode reached Sally's ears under the "merriage bell."

"No use to cry fer spilt lem'nade no more'n if 'twas spilt milk," she observed, "an' it's healthier to drink water, I really s'pose. Thank the Lord, th' well can't be tipped over. How d'ye do, Mis' Jones? This is my husband, Mr. Tubbs."

The day after the wedding made a good second show in the eyes of the entire village. The little church was crowded to see Mr. and Mrs. Abijah Tubbs come up the middle aisle in full bridal array.

"Ye see that's another reason," Sally had said over the fence to the widow Panks, "why I'm goin' to have th' jus-

tice merry us 'nstid o' th' parson. We'll have two percessions."

Parson Elwood for once looked down into a sea of faces. He rejoiced that he had pulled out one of the early sermons in his barrel, on the doctrine of election, and he delivered it with much unction as one of his best.

The deacons whispered excitedly, "There ain't enough contribution boxes — some of us must take hats round."

So Sally Plunkett's matrimonial venture worked well for the entire parish.

TWO

"'TAIN'T no use," said Mrs. Tubbs, shaking out a dainty muslin waist for one of the young ladies at the inn, "to stop my daily avocations so far 's I know, just because I got merried." She uttered this with the greatest nonchalance, and seemed to find difficulty in affixing the article in question to the clothesline. The wooden pin needed to be thrust over each sleeve, pulled out, and set in position again, before Sally, usually so deft-fingered, could be satisfied. Meanwhile the new wedding ring was making a brave display, the bride's little finger quirking handsomely in the air.

"No, 's I said before," — at last the opera-

tion was considered finished; and Mrs. Tubbs brought her gaze to her visitor's face, — "because I'm a merried woman there ain't no call 's fur 's I see fer me to turn my back on my dooties; so if you know of any more ladies up to th' *ho*tel, Mis' *Van*wyck" (Mrs. Tubbs always pronounced the summer boarder's name as if it were one word, with the accent strongly on the first syllable), "who want washin' done, why Mis' Tubbs'll do it as well as Sally Plunkett ever did."

It is impossible to describe the sweet unction with which Sally lingered over her new name.

"I will try, Mrs. Tubbs," said Mrs. Van Wyck, "to get you some more custom. I am sure everybody considers our gowns and waists to be perfectly laundered."

"Mamma, I do believe Mrs. Harmer will want Mrs. Tubbs to do her baby's gowns," cried Violet Van Wyck, in a pretty enthu-

siasm. "I'm going to ask her when we get back to luncheon."

"Much obleeged," said Mrs. Tubbs, picking up her clothes-basket. "Now come in an' set down, ladies, an' I'll show you how handsome th' flowers has kep'," leading the way to the cabin door.

"Really?" cried Violet. "Oh, Mrs. Tubbs, have they lasted till now?"

"If we do not hinder your work, Mrs. Tubbs," suggested Mrs. Van Wyck.

"Land!" exclaimed Mrs. Tubbs, hauling along the basket with her left hand, "I ain't one to let work git such a whip hand as to drive off good friends 's you be, I guess. My wash is all out," and she pointed to the long, snow-white lines swaying in the summer breeze.

"And how beautiful it all looks!" exclaimed Mrs. Van Wyck. "I should think you'd be very proud, Mrs. Tubbs, to achieve such fine work."

"No, I ain't proud. It don't become us sinful mortals to harbour no pride," said Mrs. Tubbs, with a very elate countenance, and the left hand quite busy in pushing back a stray lock from her heated forehead, "an' I hain't done no more'n my dooty by them clothes, when all's said an' done," waving the same set of toil-worn fingers; "but clothes is like folks — you treat 'em well, an' they'll treat you well; an' so they up and looks their best, an' folks goin' by says, 'There now, Sally Plun — Mrs. Tubbs had *them* in her washtub, I know.'"

She slapped the basket down on the wooden bench just beside the door, by the tubs over which the early morning hours had been passed, waved her visitors within, wiped off two chairs with the cloth in her left hand, and then rested her palms on her hips, her favourite attitude in conversation.

"As I was a-sayin', clothes is like folks, an' sometimes when I'm washin' 'em or

hangin' 'em out, I fall to talkin' to 'em. There's one good thing — they can't talk back. Why, I washed up Parson Elwood's shirts all last winter. Old Betsy got sick with the rheumatiz, an' so Mis' Elwood brought 'em to me. An' didn't I gin it to them shirts good, though! I tell you, I just mentioned my views on several p'ints o' doctrine old Dr. Elwood had been a-drivin' us hard on from th' pulpit. An' I gin it back to him through his clothes. I tell you, it tickled me to set an' look at them shinin' buzzoms Sundays. An' he must 'a' got some good from 'em bein' so near his skin, fer I ironed it all in hard."

"I suppose you talked over some of those subjects with the parson himself," said Mrs. Van Wyck, with her well-bred little smile. Miss Violet played with the fringe of her parasol in her lap.

"La, yes, whenever I got a chanst," declared Mrs. Tubbs; "but there, how often

did that come? Onct in six months or so Parson Elwood would heave along on a pas*to*ral call; but I had hard work to git in my say-so. I tell you, Mis' *Van*wyck, ministers don't mean to give folks a chanst to talk back. It makes 'em nervous an' quiggly-like if folks don't take th' law as it's picked out fer 'em by th' pulpit. Why, there was old Parson Stebbins, th' one who preached fer us just before we settled Mr. Elwood. He'd pound an' slam that Bible an' turn as red as a turkey cock in th' face, when he was a-givin' it to us, an' a-propoundin' th' Scripters. He looked jest as bad as Jed Simmons, who got drunk every week and swore like all possessed. An', my land! if anybody'd had th' gall to argify with Parson Stebbins outside th' pulpit — well there! there warn't no one could git a word in edgewise. Parson could talk like a streak o' lightnin', an' fire off texts an' Bible lingo till you wouldn't know

whether your head was on your shoulders, or whether 'twas a cabbage head under your arm. Oh, I'm fond o' parsons; but they've got their weak streaks, same 's other folks. I s'pose you think it's cur'ous, now, that I didn't have Parson Elwood marry me an 'Bijah. Well, now, th' fact is"—Mrs. Tubbs drew away her hands from her hips, to fold them, the left one uppermost, in the front of her waist line—"I always meant to be merried at Justice Spender's when th' time come, so 's I could git a husband; fer, says I, it'll be a change from th' everlastin' church weddin's; it's jest as bindin', an' th' walk down there is longer, so th' percession'll show off real pretty to my house; an' th' Justice needs th' fee more'n th' Parson, an' we'll have th' percession up th' church aisle next day. So, bein' as 'twas better all round, I'd decided it long ago. Well, you must come into th' parlour an' see how well th' flowers has kep'."

She swung open, with her left hand, the door to her best room, with great pride. Both of the windows were closed, and the air from the "merriage bell" of daisies and ferns, the great pots of woodsy things in the corners of the room, and the garlands withering around the crayon portraits, achieved by a travelling artist, of the father and mother of Mrs. Tubbs, was stifling. Mrs. Van Wyck made an involuntary effort to escape, which Miss Violet covered up by hurrying in, exclaiming, "Well, you *have* treasured them!"

"Ain't they beautiful!" cried Mrs. Tubbs, her pale green eyes glistening with pride. "Th' windows is shut tight, an' mebbe I can keep 'em till Mis' Panks's brother comes next week; he's got one o' them little boxes folks take around to get picter's in, an' he's goin' to take 'Bijah an' me under th' merriage bell." She threw an anxious glance toward it.

"Oh, Mrs. Tubbs, I've a kodak. I'll take your picture," cried Violet.

"Will you?" shrilled Mrs. Tubbs. "Well, now, I said I'd git that picter, an' now, you see, it's goin' to be took. S'pose I'd gin up 'Bijah when folks said he wouldn't never git merried. I kep' on an' finally he gin in, an' so here I be Mrs. Tubbs. When'll you take it?" She whirled around to Miss Van Wyck.

"Whenever you say. I can go and get my kodak now. Will Mr. Tubbs be ready?" looking back as she started for the door.

"My soul an' body, he ain't to home. He's gone to git th' mail fer th' *ho*tel, an' besides he's got to git his Sunday clothes on, an' there's my weddin' gown an' bunnit an' veil to settle. Now could you come this aft'noon?" she asked anxiously.

"Oh, yes," smiled Miss Violet, "I'll be over after luncheon, Mrs. Tubbs."

Gerald Fairbrother came with her, carry-

ing her kodak. He had been pledged to secrecy before Violet would allow him to even think of going.

"I haven't lisped a word. None of the girls nor men dream of it. And think of our treat! though nothing on the boards could equal that wedding reception under the 'merriage bell.'" He caught his breath at the recollection, then gave way helplessly.

"I won't have my nice Mrs. Tubbs made fun of," declared Violet. "You may turn back, Mr. Fairbrother" — she stopped short just beyond the hemlocks — "if you are going to laugh at her."

"Oh, I won't, I assure you," he choked to recover himself; "see how solemn I can be."

"I've been fond of Sally ever since I was a little girl," Miss Van Wyck kept on. "Just think, we've been coming to Hillsboro every summer for years and years. And the hours I've spent in her dear little

cottage I couldn't count. And she's just the best creature to anybody in trouble. Why, she took all the care of little Susan Panks last winter when she had the scarlet fever, to help her mother, for Johnny was sick, too. He's a very dreadful boy to manage. I ought to know, for he's in my Sunday-school class every summer."

"I wish I had Johnny's Sunday opportunities," remarked Mr. Fairbrother.

"And she just hates children," went on Violet, ignoring the last remark, and prodding the point of her parasol into the sand; "but Mrs. Panks was discouraged, and all worn out. And Mrs. Tubbs is the one who gave Jed Simmons, a poor drunken fellow that the town was going to put into a vagrant's institution, some money to go away and make a fresh start somewhere. And just think how she slaves to earn every penny."

"Miss Violet, on my honour as a gentle-

man, I'll adore your Mrs. Tubbs. She's an angel; she's an archangel. I'll sing her praises to right and to left."

"But you mustn't," cried Violet, much alarmed. "That would make Mrs. Tubbs very angry. And then she wouldn't let me go to see her."

"If you were denied entrance at the Tubbs residence, what a monstrous sacrifice!" exclaimed the gentleman.

"Well, it would be, I can tell you," declared Miss Van Wyck with spirit. "I have a nicer time with her than with our set at the inn. You'd much better turn back, Mr. Fairbrother." She took the kodak from him before he realised it, and set off at a brisk pace, her white parasol cutting the tips of the grasses as it swung from impatient fingers.

Gerald Fairbrother gained her side. It was a face as wholly different from his smiling one as could be imagined that now turned

on her. To work up a sympathy with her whims was to win her.

"Miss Van Wyck, allow me." He took the kodak from her hand. "You will not have cause to complain of me again," he said, falling into step.

But it was an awful strain on even Violet when they reached the Tubbs cottage.

"Come in," called the bride from the parlour. There she sat in wedding array, the long cotton veil trailing off back of her chair; Mr. Tubbs drawn into the furthest corner.

"We've been a-practisin', me an' my husband," she announced, "an' we're restin'. My! but I'd druther do a day's wash. But we're ready now, if th' machine is. Come, 'Bijah," and she got out of her chair.

"How do you do, Mrs. Tubbs?" inquired Violet's escort, with his best manner.

"How do you do, young man? You was here to th' reception, wasn't you?" Then

not waiting for him to reply, she called, "'Bijah, we mus'n't keep Miss Vi'let waiting; she's ready to take th' picter."

To Mr. Tubbs the coming ordeal presented terrors second only to what he had suffered on his wedding day, and his pale eyes of no particular colour roved wildly in search of escape. He still sat in his corner.

"You will enjoy the photograph very much, Mr. Tubbs," said the young man, reassuringly, and going over to his chair; "Miss Van Wyck always has such great success."

"I'm goin' to have it framed," announced Mrs. Tubbs; "see —" and she stalked over to her "whatnot" in the opposite corner. "Now I've had these shells all my life, an' didn't know what blessed thing I could do with 'em."

She thrust her left hand into a big blue china bowl, and brought it forth, running over with the mixed shells children pick up

at the seashore. "I'm goin' to make a frame of 'em, an' I'll git some pine cones to put along with 'em. But my sakes alive!"—she thrust the handful back into place, a small stream falling to the floor; Mr. Fairbrother hurried over and dodged among the ancient chairs to recover them —"here I stand a-talkin' about the frame, an' th' picter ain't even took. 'Bijah!"

But Mr. Tubbs, seeing temporary relief from the main subject, in that the group were engrossed around the whatnot, had oozed out of the doorway, and now stood behind the big "laylocks" at the back of the cottage, mopping his face with his bandanna, and saying, "Oh Lord!"

"'Bi*jah!*" Mrs. Tubbs's voice could be heard coming nearer, and his thin knees knocked together. His teeth would have chattered had the few in his possession been placed advantageously. He ducked till it took a keen eye to perceive his

spare frame. But Mrs. Tubbs had just that eye.

"Oh, dear! to think that my husband sh'd carry on so an' insult Miss Vi'let," she exclaimed, plunging up to the bush and hauling aside the branches, "an' she a-comin' clear from th' *ho*tel with her machine!"

"A great many people dislike to have their photographs taken, Mrs. Tubbs." Mr. Fairbrother deftly extricated the lace veil from a "laylock" branch.

She turned on him a countenance more of sorrow than of anger, but 'Bijah lifted a grateful eye.

"I never did hear th' like," said Mrs. Tubbs. "I'm more shamed than I can tell at my husband havin' such tantrums."

Mr. Tubbs found himself following his spouse, the young man in the rear, and presently he was standing, the picture of misery, in the centre of the circle over

which hung the drooping remains of the "merriage bell."

"'Twould look more affectionate if we was to take hold of hands, don't you think now, Miss Vi'let?" asked the bride, anxiously.

Miss Van Wyck and her escort being busy over the kodak, the bride assumed the question already answered as she wished, by possessing herself of Mr. Tubbs's nervous little fingers with her left hand, her wedding ring uppermost.

"There now, we're ready. But my sakes! 'Bijah," she darted a swift glance down at him, "you can't look like that. Mercy me! smile now, real pleasant. Wait, Miss Vi'let, don't take us yet," she begged in an agony; "he looks just awful!"

"I'll wait," promised Miss Violet. Mr. Fairbrother turned away to gaze out of the window.

"You can't never look like that, 'Bijah,"

said his wife. "How'd you feel to hang on th' wall in th' el'gant frame I'm goin' to make, with such a countenance, an' have folks remark on it? A picter's took fer all time when it's once took, you must remember, an' you can't change it, hide nor hair, an' it ain't fair to me, when I want to point to my husband an' say, 'There's Mr. Tubbs.'"

She looked so distressed that Miss Van Wyck hastened to her aid.

"Really, Mr. Tubbs, you'll be very glad of this picture when it is finished; don't feel troubled about it." She smiled, and her young eyes bent kindly on him.

Mrs. Tubbs saw some improvement, but it wasn't speedy enough to satisfy her. "I know what I'll do." She plunged off through the doorway, her long veil swishing after. "There," coming back with a plate of doughnuts and wedding cake, "men are just like children — feed 'em an'

they'll be pleasant as a basket o' chips. Now then, 'Bijah, you set down this minute an' go to eatin'," and she thrust it at him. But Mr. Tubbs was beyond eating this time.

"Will you give me a doughnut, Mrs. Tubbs?" begged Violet, "I know how delicious they are."

"Bless your heart, I'll give you whatever this house contains," cried Mrs. Tubbs, warmly. "An' Mr.—what's your name?—I declare I've ben so tried I've clean fergot it, though you was to th' reception, an' you're a partic'ler friend of Miss Vi'let's —" Miss Van Wyck's pretty cheek glowed suddenly.

The young gentleman cried quickly, "I hope I may have one also."

"Land, yes! I'll git a plateful." Again Mrs. Tubbs disappeared and shot back with the delicacies.

"Now says I, we'll all take a bite."

"Oh, I don't want anything but one of

your doughnuts, Mrs. Tubbs," exclaimed Violet in dismay, at sight of the precious wedding cake on top.

"There's nothin' too good fer you, Miss Vi'let," declared Mrs. Tubbs, vehemently. "Th' doughnuts is underneath."

"The doughnuts are better than all the cake in the world," cried Violet, taking a sugary one. Mr. Fairbrother followed suit, and Mrs. Tubbs selecting a piece of wedding cake, they all turned their backs on Mr. Tubbs to give him composure of mind.

"There's more'n one way to kill a cat," observed Mrs. Tubbs, the only remark she made during this episode, being lost in thought while slowly munching her festal delicacy, careful to corral the crumbs in her lap.

When the time appeared propitious for another attempt, Mr. Tubbs was found with an empty plate and a more resigned countenance. And he stood like a statue

long after the operation was over, with the same frozen expression on his face.

"'Bijah, you looked beautiful this time," exclaimed Mrs. Tubbs in a transport; "but, la! there ain't no need to stare no more. It's took; an' now you can shet your eyes some. An' if ever a mortal's glad, I be." She sank into a chair, raising the precious veil carefully. "It don't really seem 's though I had much to live fer now, bein' so near Peradise. I'm a merried woman, an' I've had my picter took with my husband, Mr. Tubbs."

"I declare, I ain't half grateful enough to Providence," — she couldn't stop herself, — "nor to all you folks at th' *ho*tel. Ain't I rich, though! Real silver spoons, an' Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress' full o' picters on my centre-table! 'Bijah, I'm goin' to let you look at 'em Sunday afternoons if you wash your hands first."

THREE

MRS. TUBBS stalked up to the little office at the inn.

"Mr. Barlow, I'll kerry th' mail bag to-day. My husband, Mr. Tubbs, ain't well, an' I won't let him go out."

"Is Mr. Tubbs sick?" asked the landlord in surprise, for 'Bijah, though small, was tough and wiry. "Goodness me! I sh'd as soon thought of that tree out there complainin'," pointing to a weather-beaten locust beside the door.

"Well, he ain't smart an' well," responded Sally, shortly, "an' I ain't goin' to have him real down sick. So gimme th' bag."

"What's th' matter with 'Bijah?" asked Mr. Barlow, snapping to the padlock.

"Rheumatics," said Mrs. Tubbs, concisely. "There, gimme th' bag; I hain't no time to talk." She reached her long left arm over the counter.

"You can't carry it," said the innkeeper, holding on to it. "Why, you're a woman."

"I ain't a-denyin' that. But if 'Bijah Tubbs could lug that bag down to th' post office day in an' day out, I guess I can manage it now an' then," laying a strong hand on it.

"Well, go along, Sally," said Mr. Barlow, relinquishing it, for the employment of all his wits could not suggest an honest substitute for 'Bijah among the idle boys and men of the village. "I hope 'Bijah's goin' to be all right to-morrow."

"Mebbe he will, an' mebbe he won't, but I shan't let him out till his rheumatics is gone." Sally grasped the bag and tramped off. She had already, at early dawn, been down to the inn, gathered up

the soiled clothes left out for her by her favoured families, and drawn them to the cottage in her little cart, sprung at her washing, and left everything spotlessly white swinging on the long lines.

The next day she appeared just to the minute at the inn.

"Gimme th' bag," she said.

"How's 'Bijah?" asked Mr. Barlow.

"Just th' same. I didn't come to talk. Gimme th' bag."

And the next, and the next, for a week, this performance was repeated. At last the boarders were aroused at seeing the woman who was doing the fine washing for so many families turned into a mail-carrier in addition.

"By George! this is outrageous." Mr. Van Wyck came in from the veranda. "Barlow, you ought not to allow that."

The innkeeper looked up. "She will take it. And upon my soul, Mr. Van Wyck,

I wouldn't dare to trust that bag to no one but Sally."

"Does any one know about that husband of hers, whether he's sick or not?"

"I wouldn't want to go and inquire, if Sally said he was." Mr. Barlow gave a short laugh.

"Well, I shall."

The landlord shrugged his shoulders.

Mr. Van Wyck, taking no one else into his confidence, decided to pay his call while Mrs. Tubbs had gone to the post office. So, strolling off, he reached the cottage after what he called to himself "a deucedly hot tramp."

"To think of that woman dragging that cartful down here and back, all the while!"

Reaching the cottage, he observed no preliminaries, but walked in. There sat Mr. Tubbs, his back toward him, before the kitchen table; his little bald head was bent over a big plate, while his hands were

plying busily the necessary implements to convey food to his mouth.

He thought it was Mrs. Tubbs coming in, so did not turn around. "I want some more coffee."

Receiving no reply, the little man skipped out of his chair, carrying his cup, took several lively steps, and came face to face with one of the inn boarders.

"I came to see how you were; I heard you were sick," said Mr. Van Wyck.

"So I be — so I be," said Mr. Tubbs, his thin face going through a number of contortions and the cup shaking in his hand; "I've — I've got rheumatics dretful."

He limped back to his chair and sank in its depths, mumbling to himself what his caller could not hear.

"I've always considered it bad to eat much when troubled with rheumatism." The gentleman gave a searching glance at the contents of the plate.

"Only a little bite, my appetite's so poor," said 'Bijah.

"Hem — your wife has been carrying the mail bag back and forth for a week," Mr. Van Wyck went on, letting his glance wander without to the long clotheslines where the everlasting washing was swaying, for Sally's yard never seemed to be quite clear of it.

"She would go," cried 'Bijah, fretfully, and squirming in his chair. "I ain't to blame — she makes me do everythin' as she says."

"Even to eating, I presume," observed Mr. Van Wyck, dryly. "Hem — well, I thought I'd call, for I was afraid you were very sick, Mr. Tubbs. No, don't get up, it will increase your pain, I am afraid." And he went off laughing.

Mr. Tubbs never told of the call, and the next day he seemed so bright and well, that Sally allowed him to do as he announced the first thing in the morning.

"I'm goin' to kerry th' mail bag to-day."

"Poor man," she said, watching him off, "he's had a hard time on't, an' I guess he wants to git out now among folks."

The widow Panks was also watching proceedings from her doorway.

"I never see such a change in 'Bijah Tubbs — she's a-spilin' him. Lord! she reelly seems to set store by him, Sally doos. Well, I *am* clear beat!"

And it soon became clear to every one who watched Mrs. Tubbs's married life that she was immensely fond of her husband, and cherished his precious inches with the most wifely devotion.

She washed his little bald head every Saturday night till it shone like a polished, new croquet ball, and she kept his clothes clean and mended, adding to their store whenever his insinuations in that line were heard. 'Bijah bore everything that interfered with his old-time freedom, with out-

ward resignation, braced up by thoughts of the good dinners he had eaten, and was evermore to eat now that he was her husband.

"Drat her! I wish she would let my head alone," he exclaimed to himself at last, after the weekly cleaning, and plunged without the cottage.

"Come back," Sally screamed, "you'll catch your death o' cold. Don't you know no better'n to run out after your head's ben washed?" And back he went. Then she made a big bowl of boneset tea, and made him drink it.

"There, now," she said with great satisfaction, "that'll meet th' chill," turning the bowl upside down, to be sure that not a drop remained. Which example Mr. Tubbs presently followed with himself.

She cut up her firewood the same as she did before she had the luxury of possessing a husband. When Mrs. Panks remon-

strated with her over the fence, she told her to hold her tongue.

"'Bijah didn't want to git merried, an' 'tain't fair to pile things on to him," she declared, chopping away. "You go in to your house, Nancy Panks, an' tend to some o' them children squallin' around, an' there won't be so much time fer you to stick your nose into other folks's business." And Nancy Panks went.

The Panks boy shuffled up to the inn side door just as the landlady set down the last of her row of freshly baked apple pies on the buttery-window shelf.

"If I could never see a pie again in all my mortal life, I'd be happy." She mopped her heated face with a corner of her blue-checked apron. "Here you, Johnny Panks, what do you want around here?"

"I ain't a-doin' nothin', Mis' Barlow," said the widow Panks's hopeful son, with

an injured countenance, and mouth watering at sight of the pies.

"I hain't said you did, but 'twould be precious short time before you'd be up to your tricks. What do you want anyway, Johnny Panks?"

For answer, Johnny thrust out a crumpled bit of paper, his eyes on the row of juicy pastry.

The innkeeper's wife took it gingerly and unrolled it. "Now ain't you 'shamed to muss that all up so, an' Sally Plunkett — gracious, I never shall git used to her new name — Sally Tubbs that neat! I'm mortified to give it to Mis' Van Wyck after bein' ground up in your dirty paws."

"Say, hain't you got a piece o' pie you can give me, Mis' Barlow?" whined Johnny, ignoring all reference to the state of his hands and sinking down on the upper step, to stare at the pastry. "I come clear up here with that letter, an' —"

"An' clear back you'll go; the idea! pie ain't for you, Johnny Panks," cried the irate landlady. "Scat, now," — she raised both hands and looked at him in such a way that he soon found himself off the step and down the turning of the lane.

"I'll pull her old cat's tail most off. I'll shake down her clothesline. I'll — I'll *st-boy* Tige on her when she's comin' past our house." Johnny boiled over in his rage, and shook his impotent fists.

Mrs. Van Wyck dropped the mangy bit the landlady delivered, and gazed at her daughter with real concern.

"Mamma!" Violet sprang to her feet. "Oh, what an awful wad! Johnny Panks brought that, I know."

"Never mind who brought it," cried her mother. "For the first time in seven years Mrs. Tubbs lets me know that she can't do any more washing for us." She leaned back in dismay at thought of the dainty under-

wear to be intrusted out of Sally's hands. "What can have happened?"

"I'll go right down and find out," declared Violet, springing off.

"Violet," her mother called after her, "you promised to go out on the lake with Mr. Blair."

"This must be attended to first," Violet threw over her shoulder. "You can't go — you've an awful headache. I'll tell Mr. Blair."

But Mr. Blair was off, the innkeeper said, on Miss Van Wyck's rushing out to the little office for his assistance, and he didn't know where in creation he'd gone.

"Tell him when he comes — I promised to go canoeing with him — that I've gone down to Mrs. Tubbs's. I'll be back very soon." Violet was halfway down the long veranda, landlord Barlow following her to stand in the doorway.

She rushed over the three quarters of a

mile, usually so enchanting a walk, skirting the fragrant meadows, and across the brook. "What can have happened to dear Mrs. Tubbs?"

At last, hurrying around the corner of the small house, she almost ran into the arms of the one sought for. "Oh, Mrs. Tubbs!" she cried breathlessly, with pink cheeks.

"I hope your ma 'xcused me for writin' her that note. I sent it to her th' first thing this mornin' 's soon 's I knew I couldn't do your washin' no more."

"Mamma just received it," cried Violet, panting.

"Drat that Johnny!" exclaimed Mrs. Tubbs. "He started with it early this mornin'. Well, I can't do no more washin'." She made the announcement in an automatic, dull fashion.

"Oh, what has happened?" cried Violet, the colour coming and going on her cheek.

"You mus'n't ask me," said Mrs. Tubbs, in a stiff, high key.

"Is it anything I can help about, dear Mrs. Tubbs? Do tell me at least that." Miss Van Wyck came closer yet to search her face with troubled blue eyes.

"No, you can't. There can't no one. You tell your ma I'm sorrier'n if she was th' angel Gabriel an' I'd sent him word I wouldn't dust his wings, if I'd ben a-keepin' 'em clean!"

"Oh!" cried Violet, in great distress, "can't you let us help?"

Mrs. Tubbs drew herself up to her full height with pride. "It's unpossible," she said with dignity.

She didn't ask her into the cottage, and Violet turned away at last with a heart sore at the mysterious calamity that had shut out all sympathy.

"*Mm!*" Mr. Tubbs's little lean face peered at her over the stone fence at the

first meadow. He had evidently followed her, judging by his scant breath. She was pacing slowly, forgetful of the waiting Mr. Blair. Her head was drooping and she was lost in thought. "I'll tell you somethin' if you don't let her know. We've got a baby to our house."

"A baby!" ejaculated Violet.

"*Mm!*" nodding his head. "It come last night."

Miss Van Wyck gazed at him for signs of insanity. But he blinked calmly up at her.

"An' she won't let me say a word about it to any one. There was a woman come with it," he added as an afterthought.

That admonition of his spouse to keep silence, held the young girl's tongue.

"It's that old scoundrel Abram's darter Jane, an' Mis' Tubbs says she's goin' to take care of her. Think o' that," he added in an injured way.

"Jane?"

"*Mm!* Abram Plunkett's darter; he took the farm away from Mis' Tubbs's father. *Mm!* an' her baby. They come last night," he repeated aimlessly.

"Yes — yes," said Violet, impatiently; "but your wife isn't obliged to keep them."

"She's a-goin' to, an' what'll become o' me?"

"Oh, you'll be taken care of — don't fear, Mr. Tubbs," said Violet.

"Not th' same," said Mr. Tubbs, discontentedly, picking off a grass tip to chew. "'Tain't like as 'twas a'ready. Ther' was no pie to breakfast. Think o' that. *Mm!*"

"It isn't a time to think of anything but dear Mrs. Tubbs working herself to death," exclaimed the girl, impulsively.

"An' my rheumatics is bad." Mr. Tubbs shot a glance, calling for sympathy, but find-

ing none, relapsed into gloom. "I wish to goodness—" but Miss Van Wyck was gone.

Richard Blair was awaiting her on the inn veranda with an impatience ill concealed.

"Forgive me," said Violet. She had hurried at the last, and her cheeks were pink.

"Don't mention it," said Blair, whose world was bright now that she had come. He helped her into his trap and opened the white parasol. "It's just the afternoon for the lake," he said gayly, as they spun off.

Violet Van Wyck came home at dusk with the consciousness that her mind was more on the misfortunes of Mrs. Tubbs than upon the fact that she had refused Richard Blair's offer to make her mistress of the millions that his father, a feeble old man, would soon put into the hands of his only child. He was a good sort of a chap, this young Blair, but she never gave a

thought to him beyond the everyday comradeship of the gay little country inn, and after settling matters definitely with him in the lazy canoe, she fell to musing on the ways and means by which to extricate Mrs. Tubbs from her self-imposed task.

"If she only hadn't so much conscience," she said, half aloud, in a troubled voice.

Blair glanced up quickly with a set face.

"What can be done with a person who has too much of that dreadful New England article?"

"Hey — what — I don't understand." Blair was bewildered.

"Oh, I forgot, I was thinking aloud." And then she told him the episode that would change the fortunes of the Tubbs cottage, and finished, "What can we do?"

It is a somewhat difficult matter to pick one's self up after a fall from the heights of one's choicest aspirations, to express that sympathy that otherwise might be given to

the woes of a washerwoman. Richard Blair was but human.

"I should think some of your pity might be bestowed on me," he fairly blazed at her.

She glanced up at his dark face: "Oh, I am so sorry. But you see I don't regard it as a calamity to escape being burdened with a silly little thing like me."

"Don't jest!" his voice shook with passion.

"Indeed, I would not for the world, Mr. Blair." Violet was very grave now, and she turned quite pale. He began to gather hope.

"If you could—" eagerly, in a husky voice.

"No." Miss Van Wyck shut down the gate of hope, but she said no more of the woes of others. When she reached home, there was enough to think of to pacify her father and mother, who could not help

showing their disappointment at the end of the Blair episode.

"Violet must do as she thinks best; but he is so good," mourned Mrs. Van Wyck in the solitude of their own room.

"Yes, if he'd only been a rascal, it would be easy to bear." Mr. Van Wyck threw away his cigar and took another, to supply action. His wife, not having such resource, found a woman's only relief in activity of the tongue.

"What's the use, Mabel; it can't be," he fumed. "This brand grows contemptible." He cast aside his last choice, to fumble in another box. He adored his wife; but this action of his daughter had cut him sore.

"That's the worst of it — it can't be. Oh, Thomas, why wouldn't she accept him?"

"Because she's a woman, and none of them ever do what you expect," said her husband, irritably. "Well, let us say no more. You know we always agreed when

it came to such questions we'd let our girl do as she liked, Mabel."

"Oh, dear! But then, of course, we didn't dream of her doing anything like this. Why, there isn't anything against him."

"No" — Mr. Van Wyck squirmed — "a little lack of energy in his profession," wishing there was some egregious fault.

"But it is so good of him to have any profession at all," cried his wife, eagerly; "he needn't have gone into the law when there is all that money coming to him."

"For heaven's sake, Mabel," cried her husband, "let up on the subject. It's over with and can't be helped. I'm going down for a game of whist. Come on, dear." He laid a hand on her slender shoulder.

"*Whist!* Oh, Thomas, I couldn't look at a card," she said reproachfully.

"Now see here, Mabel. You know me pretty well after living with me for twenty years. It's either cards or an explosion, for

I've reached my limit. Which will you choose?"

She chose cards, and let him lead her downstairs and engage Mr. and Mrs. Russell for a game.

FOUR

"'TAIN'T right," Mrs. Tubbs said to herself, over and over, while heating some gruel for the half-starved woman, "fer me to keep on tryin' to do that washin' fer Mis' Vanwyck now I've got other responsibilities. She'd have to wait sometimes fer her clothes now Jane's so sick. I couldn't be reg'lar even if I sat up all night, an' 'Bijah bein' took with his spells so often. I must tell Melinda Gibbs to go an' git th' job. Melinda can do 'em, of course not like me, but after a fashion. An' I'll send word by her to Mis' Vanwyck to tell all th' other ladies."

As soon as the gruel was swallowed, Mrs. Tubbs shut herself into her bedroom, and

jammed the wooden button down over the latch.

"Now me an' th' Lord's got to have another tussle, same 's we had last night when Jane come walkin' in with that baby an' says, says she, 'I'm your cousin, an' ther' ain't a livin' mortal to help me but you,' an' then flopped down on the kitchen floor, an' didn't know nothin' fer an hour. An' after I'd got her to bed, in th' loft, an' Mr. Tubbs into his bed, why I fit it out. An' th' Lord beat." She drew a long breath at the memory.

"An' here I be again, an' another tussle on my hands. I've got to sell them real silver spoons; there ain't much left in th' stockin'." She twitched open the upper drawer of the big mahogany bureau, a relic of her early days at the farm.

"I was countin' on th' summer washin's to set me up again when I bought my weddin' veil; an' them curtins was so cheap."

It took but little time to reckon up the coins, with one solitary two-dollar bill, and she tied them all in fast with the faded red string, tossed the stocking into the drawer, slammed it to, and thus delivered herself: —

"Lord, 'tain't any use fer you to keep at me. I'll do it. *I say I will.* Them spoons has got to go. Mr. Tubbs ain't a-goin' to be put out no way about nice vittles. An' Jane an' that dretful nasty baby to feed. O Lord, I say I'll do it. Ain't that enough?"

It was not an easy matter to dispose of the spoons, as the recipient could not offer them to the givers at the hotel, nor at the store in the city where they were purchased — that would be giving the story away; but they were taken off from the post of honour by the side of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" on Mrs. Tubbs's centre-table, and never more seen by her

callers. And after that the stocking bulged more, and 'Bijah had pie for breakfast.

But Jane, despite all efforts to rouse her, turned her face to the wall. "You'll take care of baby, I know," she said, "'tain't no use fer me to live."

"I won't — I won't," declared Mrs. Tubbs, wildly. "Drat that young one! I hate babies. Here, take this gruel," running to the stove for a fresh supply.

"Git away with your slops, I'm sick o' livin'." Jane shut her teeth fast with the Plunkett obstinacy. "Folks said when Jed Simmons married me — "

"Jed Simmons!" exclaimed Mrs. Tubbs.

"Yes, what you starin' at? I said Jed Simmons. Folks said when he married me I'd got a crooked stick — an' so I did. If any one got a crookeder, I'd like to know it." She sat straight in bed, and throwing up her arms she cursed to right and to left the man who was her husband, and the father of her child.

"You shut up!" commanded Sally, setting down the bowl of gruel; and advancing on Jane, she took down the wild arms and thrust the sick woman under the bedclothes. "Now, then, this is Mrs. Tubbs's house I'd have you to know, an' there ain't no such goin's on to be put up with. Here, open your mouth an' swaller this gruel." She made her do it. "You'll make up your mind to live an' take care o' your own young one, an' not shuffle it off on to me." Then she rushed out and slammed the door.

"Oh, Lord 'a' mercy! to think o' that good-for-nothin' Jed Simmons, an' me givin' him money fer a fresh start! My brain'll slump in next, an' I'll be howlin' like a lu*nat*tic."

At last Jane crept around, weak-eyed and miserable, and dandled her baby with a peevish, unwilling hand.

A party of walkers from the inn found her thus occupied outside the cottage door.

As they advanced, Sally's cousin looked up.

"I wish you'd give me some money to help me git away from here." She coughed badly, lifting her thin face to peer up at them. "I hain't got one cent to my name."

They surveyed her coldly and passed on—all but Violet Van Wyck and Gerald Fairbrother: she to go into the cottage in a vain attempt to force financial sympathy upon Mrs. Tubbs, and the young man, her companion in the walking party, to wait for her. He slipped back to Jane's side, and, one eye on the gay crowd moving off, said rapidly, "How much do you want to take you away and relieve Mrs. Tubbs of your care?"

She lifted a dull face, not understanding him. When she comprehended, her sharp, black eyes glistened, and the hectic rose to her high cheek bones.

"Twenty dollars. I'll go fer that."

"And never come back?"

"An' never come back. Lord save us, do I look like it?" She gave a short laugh, very unpleasant to hear.

"Hardly." He thrust his hand in his pocket, laid something in her lap, which she clutched with a thin, greedy hand, "As soon as you can get off."

She nodded. "Well, Mrs. Tubbs," Violet was saying in a sorry little voice, and coming out, "if you only knew how unhappy you make us all, and we so long to help you."

Gerald hugged himself. "My innings are in sight! This will win her heart." He glowed at the loss of his twenty dollars, not a small thing to him with his limited exchequer, but a trifle when the rich man's daughter was the prize in sight. And he stepped off by her side in a transport at the chance fate had thrown in his way, of serving her whim.

"Mr. Tubbs," — Sally with a weary face pushed back her hair, — "your dinner's ready."

'Bijah looked the small, scrupulously neat table over critically. She saw that something was wrong. "Th' pie's under th' plate," she said quickly, "to keep hot."

'Bijah's face brightened and he pulled up his chair.

"I ain't a-goin' to set down," said his wife, indifferently, and putting the delicacies up at his end of the family board.

Mr. Tubbs not appearing to care, but bestowing all his attention on conveying the food with knife and fork, as rapidly as possible to his mouth, she poured him a generous cup of tea, and then turned away.

"Where's th' chick'n?" he asked, with mouth full.

"'Twas et up at breakfast" — she didn't say, "You et it."

"Ain't that woman — that Jane — et it up?" pointing with his knife to the loft.

"No, there warn't none left. I give her somethin' else." Mrs. Tubbs didn't think it necessary to add that she had bought a juicy slice of steak for that purpose.

"*Mm!* Well, ain't there no more?" in a disappointed voice.

"No, I tell you, 'Bijah; but I'll git you another to-morrow," said Mrs. Tubbs, quickly.

"Chick'n's all I can eat," observed the aggrieved Mr. Tubbs, cutting a generous wedge of cold ham discontentedly.

"Well, to-morrow you'll have another one, 'Bijah." Mrs. Tubbs went up to the bedroom in the loft. "I must call Jane." She came down as white as the snowy clothes that were always her pride.

"Oh Lord — 'Bijah — Mr. Tubbs!" She sat heavily down in the first chair.

'Bijah kept on eating. He couldn't for

his life, having existed for so many years on the slenderest of meals, let his wife's good cooking be marred by trivial interruptions.

"'Bijah — I'm faint." It came in such a feeble little crow that Mr. Tubbs, astonished at such a sound in connection with his wife, paused suddenly in his gastronomic feats. "What's th' matter with ye?"

"I d'no," gasped Mrs. Tubbs; "gimme some water," faintly.

Mr. Tubbs got out of his chair, and seeing the pitcher, gave her the whole of its contents at once.

"Oh Lord, 'Bijah!" she sputtered, "what you doin'?—Whee!" as the streams ran all over her.

"What is't?" cried 'Bijah; "what ails ye?" He was really frightened now. "Here, wake up," for Mrs. Tubbs's eyes were closed.

"Th' baby — she's gone —" gasped Mrs.

Tubbs, feebly. "Oh Lord, and, Oh Lord!" And she waved in her chair.

"I'm glad on't." 'Bijah even straightened himself up. "She'd orter gone an' took it afore."

"She hain't."

"You said she had."

"She has."

'Bijah leaped away from his wife to the middle of the kitchen and stared at her in absolute terror. He wrung his little, thin hands. "She's crazy 's a loon," he groaned.

"Don't act like a fool," his wife crowed again; then, seeing his helpless condition, for he was groaning and wringing his hands, — his poor little bald head wagging from side to side, — she pulled herself straight on her chair. "One of us has got to keep th' wits th' Lord give us. 'Bijah!"

This was so like her natural voice, that the waving and groaning ceased. "Yes'm," said Mr. Tubbs, meekly.

"Come here." He stole to her chair. "That woman," pointing to the loft, "has gone an' left that baby on my hands." She held out a piece of paper fiercely and shook it at him.

It was so much worse than Mr. Tubbs had imagined that his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. His jaws wagged more than his head had done, but no words came.

"That baby — that nasty baby of Jane an' Jed Simmons to be — "

"Whose?" 'Bijah suddenly found his tongue.

"Never mind — Jane's, I say."

"Whose else's?" He pricked up his little ears eagerly.

"Never mind, I say. Ain't it enough it's Jane's? An' I've got it tied to me fer life. She says she ain't never comin' back, an' she'll fix it so 's I can't find her. Oh Lord!"

"Ye hain't got to keep it?" blurted 'Bijah.

"Why not?" She threw her long figure around on her chair to look at him.

"They take 'em at th' poorhouse in th' city," edging away.

"*Poorhouse!*" screamed his wife. "A relation o' mine put on th' town!"

"How do you know she is a relation?" Mr. Tubbs ventured, as a last resort. "You hain't got no proof."

"Yes I have. She showed me Uncle Ab'm's picter, an' she's got th' Plunkett nose. There's all th' proof I want. An' that nasty baby b'longs to me. You can't git red on't."

The person under discussion at this instant lifted up its voice in the loft.

"There it goes — there it's always goin'," exclaimed Mrs. Tubbs, tragically; "that baby's begun a'ready to fasten to me fer life." She dragged herself out of her chair and over the stairs.

"Don't talk o' pie an' chick'n," cried Mr.

Tubbs, wildly, to an imaginary audience, "when'll I ever see 'em again? Oh, you!" He shook his little thin fingers up toward the loft.

"I s'pose I'd orter think o' Jane wanderin' off without a cent o' money," said Mrs. Tubbs that afternoon, in a subdued frame of mind very touching to see. She was mending her spouse's nether garment, treading now and then the rocker of the cradle she had borrowed for Jane from Mrs. Panks; "but there, I hain't no thought over an' above this poor deserted creeter."

"It's a bad baby," said Mr. Tubbs, uneasy at the glimmerings of any tender feelings; "it's a bad, nasty baby, an' it will eat orful."

"An' I d'no but what if she was so unnat'ral as to desert it, but what 'twill be better fer him that she's gone."

"'Twon't be," snapped 'Bijah, "'twon't

be, not at all. An' he'll eat an' eat, an' want lots o' clothes."

"I hope th' Lord'll fergive me for carryin' on so." Mrs. Tubbs placed a new piece over the rent, patted it into place, and then began to darn. "Oh, dear me — but a baby!" She gave the cradle a jerk, twitched off the patch, and began to cut out another.

The baby gave a feeble cry that presently broke into a roar.

Mrs. Tubbs cast aside the trousers, sending the black patch flying one way and the scissors another. "There, see what you've done now, Sally Tubbs! Here — stop crying." She got down on her knees and with her hard hand began to stroke the thin, angry little face.

But this only made it worse. He was cross enough when awake; roused out of sleep, he was unbearable, and the shrieks came thick and fast.

"There, you mus'n't cry," Sally crooned over him, bending low within the cradle. He beat her with tiny fists of passion. At last, she never knew how she did it, she swooped down, gathered him up to her breast and held him close.

"There shan't nothin' hurt ye. There shan't nothin' hurt ye," she cried, holding her long, hard-lined face against the tear-swept little red one. "You pretty creeter you. There, there, there!"

'Bijah took one look at this, and fled the cottage to lean up against the fence.

Out came the widow Panks.

FIVE

"SHE'S a-huggin' th' baby!" he gasped the words, clinging to the top railing for support.

"You don't say so!" Mrs. Panks cried wildly. "You hain't seen straight, 'Bijah."

"An' she kep' a-sayin' she hated it, an' 'twas tied to her fer life." He mouthed it so fast the widow only caught the first sentence.

"I know it — an' now huggin' it! Well, I *am* clear beat." She crept off, if the locomotion of such a round body could be thus described, toward the house.

"Keep away!" screamed 'Bijah in a thin, sharp voice. "She's crazy as a hornbug."

"I ain't goin' in. I'll peek through the winder" — which she did.

It was as Mr. Tubbs said. There paced Sally back and forth across the kitchen floor, the baby's head under the long chin; and wonder of wonders, Mrs. Tubbs was actually achieving some sort of lullaby that sounded more like the creaking of a gate upon a rusty hinge. But it pleased its listener, for his howls had ceased, and he was sucking his thumb.

"My soul an' body! what's come to Sally?" breathed the widow, straining her eyes, and working her short neck to see better. Mrs. Tubbs turned in her tracks and saw her. "Come in," she called.

Widow Panks sank below the window casing. "Oh, I don't darst," she breathed fearfully.

"Why don't you come in?" cried Mrs. Tubbs in such strident tones that Mrs. Panks found herself slowly entering the

cottage, taking the precaution to leave the door open.

"Shut that door" — she shut it.

"Now, then, I want to talk to you about this baby, sence its mother's gone."

"Mother gone!" ejaculated the widow. She forgot to shut her mouth after this exclamation, and her eyes being open to their fullest extent the sight got on Mrs. Tubbs's nerves.

"Can't you hear a thing without lookin' like a fool, Nancy?" she cried irritably. "Yes, I said its mother's gone. Anythin' strange in that?"

"Where's she gone?" asked Nancy.

"None o' your business; that's neither here nor there. What I want of you is to git a few p'ints on how to manage a baby. Th' Lord knows you've had experience, Nancy."

"I guess I have," said the widow, grimly. All her family cares rushing over her mind

brought her to herself and to the powers of speech.

"Now begin; what do I do about washin' him?" She glanced at the bundle in her arms in its dirty red gown, with a helpless terror in her face.

"You don't wash 'em much. Mine never were."

"Oh, dear! I know it. Well, this boy's goin' to be washed. How do you do it, Nancy?" The tone was pleading, and such a change from the usual Sally, as inspired a fresh dismay in the widow.

"Well, I should put him in a tub."

"I thought folks held 'em on the lap, an' soaped 'em," suggested Mrs. Tubbs.

"If you're goin' to wash a baby, I should wash it," declared Mrs. Panks, finding it quite to her liking to reverse positions and boss her neighbour. "Fill your tub full an' plump him in."

"Oh!" Mrs. Tubbs's arms tightened

around her charge so summarily left to her care.

"Well, what next?" she asked.

"Why, then you dry him," said the widow. "After he's wet all over, he wants to be wiped, don't he?"

"Yes, of course — but don't you put white stuff on him? I saw Mrs. Harmon up to the *ho*tel doin' it to her baby when I took home her clothes."

"White stuff!" repeated Mrs. Panks in scorn. "No, indeed, water an' a rag's all you want. You be a fool, Sally." It was such a comfort to say that for the first time in her life, that she repeated it. "You be a fool."

Mrs. Tubbs made no reply.

"I never can dress him," she said at last; "just see there, Nancy Panks." She turned the baby over and over on her long, restless arms. "Such a lot o' pins; an' I don't know no more'n th' dead how to git him out an' into these fixin's."

"Gimme that baby," the widow commanded. Mrs. Tubbs relinquished her charge with reluctance. "Such a piece o' work as you make out o' this, Sally. It's as easy as rollin' off a log to dress a baby." She had half the clothes off by this time, sticking the pins in her mouth, as she sat down on a low chair, and was rolling and thumping the young man to achieve the rest of the undertaking.

"Oh, you'll hurt him," exclaimed Mrs. Tubbs in alarm, crowding close.

"Phoo! don't I know what's good fer babies?" Apparently she did, for he looked up and smiled, recognising a trained hand.

"Now, then, young man," said Mrs. Panks, when the disrobing was complete, "there you are, in a state of nater," and she turned him over and gave him a resounding slap where he was least likely to be injured for life.

"Ow!" cried Sally in anger, and seizing the plump arm, "don't you do that again, Nancy Panks."

"It's good fer 'em," said the widow, righting the baby. "Goo—goo," he cried, stretching his legs.

"Well, you ain't a-goin' to do it to my baby, I can tell you."

"Yes, sir, you're in a state o' nater, young man," holding up the naked baby to sprawl in the air. "Phew! how dirty his clothes are! Git his others, Sally."

Mrs. Tubbs's long face gathered a dull red all over its surface. "He hain't got no others. I'm goin' to set down an' make some right away."

"Well, gimme an old sheet or somethin' to roll him in," said Mrs. Panks, throwing aside the heap of dirty clothes in her lap, and spitting out the pins.

"He'll get cold. Nancy, can't you let me take some o' your Sammy's fixin's just

till I can run together a kind o' sort o' clothes for him?"

Mrs. Panks lowered a line of thought and fished around in her mind for a breathing space. "I s'pose so," she said slowly; "but I hain't got but one change for Sammy."

"I'll do 'em up splendid fer you before I give 'em back." Sally's pale green eyes sparkled.

"Well, you can take 'em, Sally," promised Mrs. Panks, with a magnificent air. "Now, then, we might as well wash him, seein' he's all neked. Git a tub o' water, Sally."

"I'd druther do it myself, I think," said Mrs. Tubbs, slowly.

However, being half-minded about performing the dreaded operation, she half filled the washtub and dragged it along before the widow. She was so long in deciding just how hot the water should be

she was to carry in her pail, that Mrs. Panks shrilled out, "Hurry up!" more than once.

"There's more in th' tea-kittle." She poured the pailful into the tub.

"Glory! he'll squirm, I guess. That's too cold," said the widow, not hearing. "Well, in he goes!" and before Mrs. Tubbs could prevent it, in he went. He did squirm, and made a great fuss in more ways than one, and Sally twitched away the authoritative arms, seized the roaring baby, flew for a big towel, and dried him like any other article that was wet, and then faced her quondam friend and neighbour with blazing eyes.

"You go right straight home, an' never come here again, Nancy Panks."

"'Twouldn't 'a' hurt him a mite, he'd warm up in a minute," said the widow Panks, aghast at the change in the situation.

"Go home; d'ye hear what I say?"

"You shan't have any o' Sammy's clothes," cried Nancy, in spite.

"I don't want 'em, I'd sooner wrap him up in anythin' than to take those old duds. There, there, don't cry." She had run into the bedroom and seized her honeycomb quilt off the bed, to huddle it around the screaming baby.

"Oh my! your best bedspread!" exclaimed the widow, raising her wet hands in amazement. The precious quilt was the one thing of Sally's that was coveted by all the neighbours.

"Go home!"

"I'm a-goin'. I don't have to be told twict, I guess," said Nancy, testily, getting off from her low seat with difficulty, and passing out in a dudgeon.

"I wish you joy with your baby, Sally Plunkett," she hurled back, determined not to please Mrs. Tubbs by the sound of her new name, "an' I'll send over an' git that cradle I lent his ma."

* * * * * *

They were just going down to the "ball-room," the long, low-ceilinged extension that the landlord had put on to the inn the previous summer to satisfy his increasing custom. It was to be the hop of the season, and the young people were crowding the stairways and corridors, and promenading the veranda, while the musicians were tuning up in the festive apartment. It was great times for Johnny Panks and his friends on such gala nights, and here he was now, gluing his face to the window to see the fiddler tighten the strings of his instrument, with those delightful trial-ending squeaks, and the cornetist give a few preliminary toots. A white-robed figure was floating past. She stopped, and the gentleman with her.

"How do you do, Johnny?"

"How d'ye do, Miss Vi'let?" He scraped his bare toes back and forth on the veranda floor. He wasn't so afraid of her

in Sunday-school, for he knew how to get the best of any teacher. But here he was simply crushed.

"How is Mrs. Tubbs?" asked Miss Van Wyck, one thought in her mind.

Johnny had been told to get the cradle; but with such an engagement on his mind as the hop at the inn, he preferred to wait till morning.

"She's fit with ma," he announced, with his usual directness.

"She's what?"

"Scrapped with ma."

"Oh, dear me! What is the trouble?"

"The nasty baby; an' ma don't like Mis' Tubbs no more — but I do. She gives me doughnuts, an' sometimes I stay there to dinner when we ain't goin' to have anythin' good. But now that woman's gone, ma says Mis' Tubbs'll have enough to do without cookin', so I ain't goin' there no more neither."

"That woman gone?" echoed Violet. "What do you mean, Johnny Panks?"

Quite elated at his prominence before the other ragged boys of his acquaintance who had crept in his wake to the window, Johnny reeled off with great unction the whole story as much as he knew, making up what he didn't know; till Miss Van Wyck understood that Mrs. Tubbs's cousin Jane had run away secretly, leaving her deserted baby, for Johnny could tell more than his mother, as he had just pumped Mr. Tubbs as dry as an empty gourd.

"Mr. Hastings, do excuse me one minute." Violet glanced up at the young man, a friend of Richard Blair's, who had come from New York that day for the evening's festivities. She sped down the veranda.

"Who is this Mrs. Tubbs?" asked the deserted young man, nonchalantly.

"She's a partic'ler friend o' Miss Vi'let's," said Johnny, trying to compass in a pro-

longed stare all the elegance before him; "she takes in washin', an' now she's got a baby she don't want, an' 'Bijah Tubbs is just as mad as anythin'. Why don't you go in an' dance?"

Violet Van Wyck, rushing to tell her mother, came suddenly upon Mr. Fairbrother, immaculate in evening dress, descending the stairs. He stopped at the apparition in floating white draperies. "What is the matter, Miss Van Wyck?" he demanded in consternation at sight of her face.

"That dreadful woman, that Jane, has run off and left her baby for poor Mrs. Tubbs to take care of." It certainly was an appalling announcement.

Gerald Fairbrother simply collapsed, and held to the staircase post without a word.

"How could she go? Mrs. Tubbs told me she had only money enough to get here," Violet panted.

"Miss Violet—I—I gave her the money," gasped Gerald. The entire truth was out in one sentence.

"*You!*"

"Yes; I thought, of course, she would take the child, and leave Mrs. Tubbs in peace. I—I—wanted to surprise you." He wilted miserably.

"Well, you have succeeded admirably." The scorn in her voice and face stung him to the quick.

He stiffened up. "My success is also great in another direction. I have found that a woman whom I thought angelic can be disappointing." It was brutal, the way he said it, more than the words. But his temper got away from him.

"Thank you!" Violet's soft white gown dipped to the floor. Nothing could be more airy than the courtesy she made him, then turned off with her grand air.

"Miss Van Wyck—Violet." Visions of

his irreparable loss if she failed him — this petted daughter of the rich man — swept him off on a tide of anguish. And he had been so near to the goal! Fool he was for his wild words! "Violet — hear me!"

But once beyond the young man's gaze, she ran like a child, and precipitated herself into her father's arms, to pour out the story. "Do go down, papa, to the cottage and find out about it, and see if some one can't start for that dreadful woman and bring her back."

"Whew! what a monstrous idea! Now I tell you, Puss," — he stroked her pink cheek, — "you just drop Mrs. Tubbs and her concerns from your mind, and go in to the hop."

"Yes, that's just it, drop that poor woman," cried Violet, passionately, "and then that wicked creature will get miles away."

"She's miles away now probably," said

Mr. Van Wyck, coolly. "Come, run along, child, to your dance."

"I never could dance in all this world and think of poor, dear Mrs. Tubbs so very unhappy."

"Well, don't think of her."

"I can't help it."

"See here, Violet," — her father drew her into a quiet corner, — "as you grow older, you'll have many a thing that you'll maybe want to brood over. Look at the troubles that we business men have; yet we must eat our three meals a day, and laugh and talk with folks. Everybody has to fight trial that way."

She knew something of a certain financial load he was at present carrying, and her heart smote her sore. "Papa, I'm sorry," she cried, quickly repentant; and getting up on her tiptoes, she seized his gray mutton-chop whiskers and pulled his face down for a kiss.

"I can bear anything so long as my little girl loves me and keeps a sensible mind," he said brokenly.

Mr. Hastings, coming along the corridor in search of her, sighted this episode. "Great Scott!" he exclaimed under his breath, "I never knew before that a girl wasted her kisses on her dad," and turned on his heel to dodge into another corner.

He ran up against Richard Blair. "Say, Dick, that Miss Van Wyck is a stunning girl, now I tell you. Has her father a good bank account?"

Blair viewed his friend coldly. "Not particularly, I should say." In the financial world it was well known that the old house of Van Wyck and Cowles was under pressure. Hastings, on the trail of an heiress, must be sidetracked.

"Confound it, she's a peach! I'd enter the race if the father could throw in a good dot. I can't see how you ever passed her

by, Blair. You don't need filthy lucre, lucky dog."

Richard Blair drew a long breath. "No one could pass her by. I offered myself to her."

"*And she refused you?*"

"And she refused me. Any further questions? If not, I should suggest that as you are to lead the German with Miss Van Wyck, you would do well to find her. It's past the hour."

"*She refused Dick Blair and his millions!*" Hastings found himself alone. He was a poor leader of the German, trying to puzzle out the thing. But he retained his wits enough to fall hopelessly in love with his partner. As for Mr. Gerald Fairbrother, he didn't show up at all at the dance.

SIX

LETTER was handed in for Violet Van Wyck. For a week she had proved her father's words: "We must eat our three meals a day, and laugh and talk with folks; everybody has to fight trial that way."

Had she not done it? Every one knew after the dance, that Gerald Fairbrother had paid his bill at the inn and departed, while the rest of the young people were dancing and the parents looking on. And it was also known that she was as much surprised as were the others at his sudden departure.

But she had done as her father had advised, and been all this weary, racking time a brave little woman.

"Oh, how he looked when I turned so cruelly away! And he did it to please me! Oh, Gerald, Gerald!" She dropped her head on her hands, and sobbed like a broken-hearted child.

Mrs. Barlow stumbled up the stairs in the twilight. "Miss Violet?"

"Yes."

"I've got somethin' fer you."

The landlord knew Mr. Fairbrother's writing and had communicated his belief with a knowing wink to his wife, who itched to see the receipt of the letter.

"Please lay it down, Mrs. Barlow."

"Hadn't you better take it, Miss Violet?"

"No; please lay it down by the door."

Terribly disappointed, the landlady ran the letter under the door. When Violet saw the corner appearing, she jumped from her low seat by the window and pulled it in, and after one wild glance

laid it to her pretty bosom, then covered it with kisses.

It was soon read.

"My dear Miss Van Wyck: At first I did not wonder at your scorn occasioned by my terrible blunder. Of course I should have consulted you, who perhaps might have understood how to rid that miserable washerwoman of her burden. But I did it to please you. I will say good-by; and I wish you a pleasant summer.

"Gerald Fairbrother."

No address, no date — only the post-mark New York. His temper had not only gotten the better of him again, but the Van Wyck and Cowles shadow had been penetrated by the diligent use of his time among the sagacious.

They found her so when, on receiving no response to her calls, her mother fled in

terror to Mr. Van Wyck. The door was broken open. There she lay on the floor, her soft little hands still holding the letter close.

There was a doctor at the inn, and she soon came back to a miserable consciousness. But the spirit dropped out of all plans for fun, with Violet Van Wyck sick; and no better prospect being ahead, many of the young people begged their guardians to take them to some gayer place. The letter was still the secret of the Van Wycks, the landlord and his wife loyally keeping back the fact of its receipt. All that any one knew was that Miss Van Wyck had been taken suddenly ill, and was now weak and strangely listless.

In New York, Fairbrother and Hastings, old acquaintances, had run across each other at an uptown café they both frequented. They nodded across the apartment, and before their orders were given, changed

their tables in order to lunch together. Over the wine, facts came out. Hastings had the account of the whole proceeding, but not until the hint furnished by Richard Blair as to the financial rating of père Van Wyck had been parted with.

Gerald's anger flamed high. "It's an infernal lie!" He poured a fresh glass of wine. "He wants her himself; it's been perfectly apparent all summer."

"Of course; but you're a blooming idiot, Fairbrother. Haven't I just told you he offered himself to her. There would be no reason for spoiling my chances or those of any man. But if you don't believe me, ask Dunbar. He'll give you the truth."

Fairbrother swore within himself that he would. Meanwhile he felt it was true, and so became communicative. And that night, Dunbar, a financial authority, said briefly over his cigar at the club: "If you are interested in that quarter, I advise you to

drop it. The pretty daughter will have nothing."

Gerald shrugged his shoulders — "I can't afford expensive luxuries." He passed into the writing room, and the letter for Hillsboro went out that night.

Richard Blair preferred to stay "for the fishing," he said, and he watched the young people and their trunks depart from the veranda. After the last one had gone, he strolled into the office.

There sat the innkeeper and his wife, dismally casting up accounts.

"It's too bad for you," said young Blair, sympathetically.

"It can't be helped." Mr. Barlow drew a long breath.

"And we can't never say a word as long as it's happened to the Van Wycks," his wife hastened to say loyally; "they've ben here now seven summers, an' brought lots o' custom, an' ben as pretty to us all the

time as could be. No, we can't say a word."

"Still, it's hard on you," said Blair, wishing he had such stanch friends, "and I want to express my sympathy. Oh, by the way, I think I'd like more room now, seeing you have it, and if there's no objection, I'll move into that corner suite; and you may give me Number 10 in the front, also."

Mr. Barlow's face glowed. Here was a chance to recover some of his losses. That corner suite pieced out with the front room would bring in four times as much as the apartment at present occupied by the young man.

"All right, sir," he cried joyfully. "I'll have your things moved down."

"And — another thing; I've just received word that some friends of mine, to whom I wrote last week, want to come — Mr. and Mrs. Taylor, and three daughters."

"Now you're a-talkin'," exclaimed Mr.

Barlow, his hand trembling with delight while he tried to write the names; "much obleeged to you, sir."

"An' we take it it's just pretty in you, Mr. Blair," cried his wife, joyfully; "we shan't fergit it of you, an' we'll make 'em all as comfortable as can be." Her round face was one big smile that ingulfed her double chin.

"Well, I'm glad things will look a little brighter," said the young man, lightly, turning away.

"It would never do for Mr. Van Wyck to have the worry of any losses to these good people. He is just the man who would pay them back. Now, I must get off some more letters."

It was astonishing how many of Mr. Richard Blair's friends suddenly found that they must get to Hillsboro to spend the remainder of the summer and the early autumn. They came dropping along with

their big trunks every day or two till the inn was once more filled up. No one knew how bored he was by having a lot of people on his hands for entertainment; but he was a veteran at such work, and gave no sign but that he liked it. And Charley Van Wyck, taking a desperate fancy to one of the Taylor girls, made a capital ally and soon relieved him of the worst of it.

And Harriett Taylor, reciprocating, fell madly in love with Charley Van Wyck; and as the other Taylor girls looked for as good luck (not with Richard Blair, hope was dead in that quarter, but among some of his friends), everything was gay once more and quite as if Violet Van Wyck had never been the bright particular leader.

She had flowers, beautiful ones, sent from the city every day.

"Say nothing about it," were Mr. Blair's orders to the landlord; "just keep them

fresh in her room." And Violet, weak and wretched, looked at them listlessly, and one day with a twinge of remorse at her ingratitude, thanked her father.

"I didn't get them, child," he said. And then it all came out.

"Oh, he mustn't send them. Tell him not to, papa." She made him promise, and sank back upon her cushions relieved.

"Well, now, I've come to set with you a spell," a voice that could belong to no one but Mrs. Tubbs struck into her solitude. Her mother, quite worn with anxiety, had gone to lie down. Papa was on the veranda reading his paper, and Charley was with Harriett Taylor. Violet was alone with her sad thoughts. She looked up. "Oh, Mrs. Tubbs, you've brought the baby!"

"Yes." Sally marched in with beaming face. "Ain't he pretty?"

He had a sky-blue delaine dress on and

red shoes, and Sally had twisted up his stiff, yellow hair, and tied it with a pink ribbon over his left eye. She viewed him and her work in the utmost complacence.

"I really believe you are fond of that child, Mrs. Tubbs," said Violet.

"I set some store by him, that's a fact," said Mrs. Tubbs, snuggling her charge within her long arms. "Miss Vi'let," she suddenly confessed, "there's only one thing that worrits me. I'm afraid his mother'll repent and come after him."

"Oh!" exclaimed Violet. Then she suddenly laid down her head on the cushions and cried as if her heart would break. This chance remark brought it all back.

"What have I said? Oh, don't let it worrit you; p'r'aps she won't come." Mrs. Tubbs set the baby down on the floor, propped him up against a big chair, then laid her strong arms on the young, shaking shoulders. "Miss Vi'let, you hadn't orter

carry on so. What in this world o' misery *is* th' matter?"

"Oh! oh!" the girl sobbed on.

Mrs. Tubbs left her and hurried over to pick up the baby. "There, now, you may hold Ira Plunkett. I named him after pa. He's a sight o' comfort to me when I feel bad." And she plumped him in Violet's lap.

"Take him away!" Violet sat straight. "I can't hold him. Take him right away this minute, Mrs. Tubbs."

"I shan't tetch him. Hold on tight now, or he'll roll off, an' maybe kill himself." Mrs. Tubbs folded her long arms, and stood away in the middle of the room.

"Look at his frock, ain't it pretty? That's my blue delaine your ma give me."

"Oh, Mrs. Tubbs, did you cut that up?" said Violet, reproachfully, and hanging to the baby for dear life.

"Had to; there warn't a scrap o' nothin

else. Ain't it nice for him? An' that ribbin I took off from my weddin' bunnit."

"Where did you get the red shoes?" asked the girl, astonished to find herself interested. The tears were still wet on her cheek.

"Well, now, I'll tell you." Sally unfolded her arms to set her palms on her hips, and, delighted at her stratagem, reeled off how the storekeeper, Mr. Fitch, hearing about the baby, had sent them as a present.

"That was very nice of him," said Violet, approvingly, patting one of the little shoes. Ira reached up and clawed her hair.

"Oh, my!" Mrs. Tubbs flew to the rescue. "He don't mean no harm," untwisting his determined fingers.

"Nothing hurts me now," said Violet, wearily.

"Miss Vi'let, I'm goin' to speak my mind to you. You're worryin' your pa and ma 'most to death."

"Don't!" the girl shivered and put up a thin little hand beseechingly.

"I'm a-goin' to. I won't have it on my conscience that I kep' still. I've ben over here every day or two."

"And you've been so good. I never will forget your kindness, Mrs. Tubbs," cried Violet; "but don't say any more now," she begged.

"I've ben over every day or two," repeated Mrs. Tubbs, unmoved by the appeal, "an' I've only ben waitin' till you was strong enough to hear me. An' this aft'noon, says I, it's got to be done. I'll dress Ira in his best, an' make her hold him where she can't git away, an' then, says I, she's got to hear me."

"You're cruel," said Violet under her breath. Mrs. Tubbs heard her, and she swallowed hard.

"Miss Vi'let, if you was to have a tooth pulled, th' best way would be to open your

mouth an' have it over with as soon 's th' man could twitch it out. That's th' way I feel about my dooty in speakin'. I ain't a-goin' to make many words; all I say is, you orter git up out o' this room an' go downstairs an' make things pleasant fer your pa an' your ma."

"It's impossible," cried Violet, wildly. "You don't know what is on my heart." Her anger was rising now.

"No, I don't," said Mrs. Tubbs, outwardly unperturbed, though she told Miss Van Wyck afterward that she shook like all possessed inside. "I don't know that no more'n th' dead; but I do know that your ma and your pa'll keel up suddenly if this thing goes on much longer. Then I guess you'd be sorry. Don't go to pilin' up sorrows to cry over all your days.

"Misfortunes is one thing, an' troubles you make yourself is another," she went on.

"But that's just it: I've made this trouble myself." Violet broke out into a cry again. Mrs. Tubbs seized Ira Plunkett, propped him on the floor against his big chair, then sat down on the lounge and drew the girl into her lap.

"You ain't much bigger'n that baby," she said. "There, now, you've just got to tell me all about it."

Violet laid her head on Sally's bosom, and the whole story came out.

"Well, I never did — two young fools. He was a fool fer doin' it, and you're another fer scoldin' him, an' then takin' on so. Why in th' world don't you write to him?"

"Oh, I don't know where he is," sobbed the girl.

"Your pa could find out."

"Oh, no, no; I won't let him."

"Umph! I guess you don't care much fer him."

"I do — I do," cried the girl, impulsively.

"Well, I wouldn't," said Mrs. Tubbs, slowly, "fer he's shown himself kinder small, in my opinion."

"Mrs. Tubbs, you are a perfectly dreadful woman to say such things," cried Violet, angrily, and down went her head again on Sally's hard bosom, and she sobbed as if her heart would break. Mrs. Tubbs rocked her long body back and forth, and let the girl cry on, while she lost herself in thought. At last she said, "I hain't come to but one conclusion, an' that is, seein' your pa and ma hain't done nothin', it's kinder dirt mean to worry them to death." Violet did not answer. "An' th' first thing you ought to do, in my opinion, is to think o' them." Still no answer.

"Th' Lord makes it dretful hard fer us sometimes to do our dooty; but there, that's His way. An' if we don't give in, we git our noses broke worse. Now, Miss Vi'let, git up an' put on that pretty white frock

I washed last fer you. An' go down an' s'prise your pa; he's settin' on th' piazzy readin' his paper as I come by."

"I can't," cried Violet, burrowing deeply within the long arms.

"He's lookin' awful thin lately," observed Mrs. Tubbs, slowly.

"*Don't!*"

"An' when he goes — he's so stocky, he'll go sudden —"

Violet sprang to her feet. "Get my gown," she cried hoarsely, "in the third drawer," she was over by the toilet table, pulling all the pins out of her pretty brown hair. Mrs. Tubbs, scared to death at the good result of her words, knocked over several small articles on her way, opened every drawer but the right one, finally found the gown, and turned with it, as the girl met her to have it lifted over the soft waves, every hair with careless grace in its right place.

In two minutes, Mrs. Tubbs was alone with her baby in the Van Wyck apartment. "Moses an' Aaron, ain't I scared, Ira!" she ejaculated, grovelling on the floor by that young man's side. "O my Lord, what a scrape you got me into when you told me to come here an' stir her all up! Oh, whee! an' I was so comf'table to home, an' I've had to leave my husband, Mr. Tubbs, all alone meanwhilst."

SEVEN

THE Panks children falling ill from connection with too many green apples in the orchard of the next farmer, the widow thought it wrong to harbour a grudge against Mrs. Tubbs any longer, and accordingly made her a call one afternoon.

"'Tain't neighbourly to live so, an' you an' me used to be so intimate, Sally. Won't you come over an' help me a bit?"

Mrs. Tubbs, working for dear life on Ira's dress, turned and surveyed her slowly.

"Th' Lord knows I want to give you a piece o' my mind like p'isen, Nancy," she said; "but I s'pose I've got to go, though you ain't wuth it." She laid down her

sewing in the chair. "What's your young ones bawlin' fer?"

"Green apples," said Mrs. Panks, shortly. "I wish't they wouldn't all eat to onct. 'Twouldn't be so bad if 'twas one at a time."

"I s'pose you want pep'mint," said Mrs. Tubbs with an eye on her little cupboard over the stove.

"Yes, Sally, I do; mine's all out."

As this was the usual state of Mrs. Panks's supply, Mrs. Tubbs only snorted. "It's good Ira Plunkett is asleep," she said, looking at the big box, where since the withdrawal of the cradle, Jane's child had been put to rest.

The widow's fat cheek turned a lively red. "I'm sorry I took back that cradle," she said; "Johnny'll bring it over again."

"No, he won't neither," declared Sally, decidedly; "I like th' bed he's in a great deal better. It's healthier not to rock

babies," she added, with all the wisdom of one who had brought up a large family; and taking down the peppermint bottle, the two went over together to the squalling children, to fight the green apples.

"Say, whose baby is that to your house?" suddenly asked Mrs. Panks when the green apples had let up a bit, and there was comparative quiet.

"Jane's," said Mrs. Tubbs, laconically.

"Of course; who's its other parient?"

Mrs. Tubbs whirled around suddenly, the bottle in her hand. "Nancy Panks, when you catch a weasel asleep, then you'll know."

"I don't care about knowin'," said the widow; "I only ast fer conversation."

"Well, keep your gabbles fer somethin' that concerns yourself, Nancy, that's my advice," contributed her neighbour. "That tongue o' yourn, an' your lively ears, O Lord, to give such a *com*bine to one person; it's egregious."

"I guess my tongue an' my ears are just as good as yours, Sally," said Mrs. Panks, bridling.

"They may be set quite as pretty — your ears may," said Sally. "I ain't a-denyin' that. The Lord when He made me, fergot to take a piece off'n mine. But land o' liberty! they don't twitch so fer news as those on your head are doin' every blessed hour o' th' day. Nancy, I sh'd think you'd be all wore out."

"Well, I ain't," snapped the widow. "It's these brats that wear th' life out o' me. Shut up now! Your stomachs would stop achin' if you didn't screech so. Hain't I told you a hundred times to let green apples alone?" She went about among them, dealing generous slaps as they wallowed on the kitchen floor.

"Here, you stop that!" commanded Sally. "Lord save us, it's bad enough to have a stomach ache, without bein' pounded an' lammed."

Here several of the children disentangled themselves from the group, and made a rush for Sally.

"Oh, my gracious!" she exclaimed, tumbling back, as they all squirmed to get into her lap, begging, "Take me, Mrs. Tubbs, — no, she's goin' to take me," in a dreadful chorus.

"I guess if you had 'em day in an' day out, you'd lam," said their mother, while the children swarmed all over Mrs. Tubbs, and wiped their poor noses on her clean apron.

"There — there, don't screech so. If you do, I'm goin' home" — which sufficed to bring a lull in the squall.

"Hain't you got a doughnut to give me?" begged one of the boys, coming out of his gripes the earliest. "I'm dretful bad, an' I want a doughnut."

Sally laughed. "You little varmint, you screeched the loudest of you all. I don't

give no doughnuts to boys that raise bedlam like you do."

"I won't holler no more."

"You better not."

Little Susan raised a white face, and set her teeth tight. Her eyes were rolled up in her head. Mrs. Tubbs cast the rest away summarily.

"*Nancy, come here!*"

When the widow saw her child, she gave a loud scream. This started the children off again till the kitchen rang with the noise.

"Nancy — you'll have to hurry — hot water — quick! I don't know no more'n th' dead what to do fer a child, but if 'twas a person I'd put 'em in hot water — she's cold as a stone. An' castor oil, Nancy, she's got to git them apples up. Quick, Nancy, fer your life!" She laid little Susan on the bed.

"There ain't no castor oil." Mrs. Panks was wringing her fat hands.

"I'll git mine." Sally flew over home. "Oh Lord! eight children an' no castor oil, an' I keep a big bottle jest for 'Bijah."

But little Susan was beyond castor oil, and although they pinched her poor little nose, she couldn't swallow. "She's et somethin' else besides apples," said Sally at last. "Run fer th' doctor. Oh Lord! what's she et, children?" They all clustered around the bed, scared into quiet.

The biggest girl said, "Red berries," which sent the mother off into a fresh fright; while Jimmy, the boy who had begged a doughnut, showed a lively pair of heels after the village doctor.

Meantime, Ira Plunkett, left to himself in the old box, of course awoke. At first he was serene, preferring probably to turn his late dreams over in his mind. At last he yearned for company, and lifting up his voice said gently, "Ar-goo."

Receiving no response, he essayed again, in clearer tones, indicating a decided relish for society.

Now older people will agree that it isn't pleasant to have one's social advances meet silence. It is chilling, to say the least. So it struck Ira Plunkett, and he recoiled within himself. Then a wave of righteous indignation struck him and carried him high. He emitted a roar, and finding from the wind that this produced in his interior, that he really was hungry, he doubled his fists, beat his heels, vainly endeavouring to kick off the clothes Sally had tied down, and soon the noise almost equalled the squall that had upset the Panks kitchen.

Mrs. Tubbs heard him in the awful stillness as the two women worked over little Susan. But she couldn't leave her, for this was fighting death, maybe. Her long face was gray with the battle; she turned away from a sight of the poor widow. Nancy

flew to her at last like a wild animal. "She shan't die!"

"You hush!" commanded Sally. "Children, run out an' see if th' doctor's comin'."

Given something to do, the whole troop precipitated itself out eagerly.

"Don't you say a word about dyin' before them young ones," said Mrs. Tubbs, sternly.

"My Susan — oh, oh!" moaned the stricken mother. "An' I slapped her; O my Lord, have mercy!"

"Here, git some more hot water," cried Sally, at her wits' end to furnish action for the widow, who was now on the edge of a collapse.

"He's come! He's come!" The whole bunch of Pankses with one voice tumbled into the kitchen. "I saw his gig first," screamed one.

"You didn't — I did."

"No such a — "

"*Hush!*" commanded Sally, hoarsely.

"Every one of you go out, an' don't you come in again. Tell Dr. Blodgett to hurry."

"Mrs. Tubbs is awful mean an' nasty," said the biggest girl as they precipitately pitched out. "I don't like her one single, teenty bit."

The little doctor grasped the situation at a glance, threw off his coat, and went to work. At the end of an hour, a long white sheet, one of Sally's best, was drawn over the bed, beneath which in snowy outline a childish figure could be seen.

"You've done all you could. The child was poisoned, and nothing could save her when you found it out."

The widow was in Mrs. Tubbs's arms, and Sally's tears ran down over the coarse, red hair. The doctor bent over them both. "Now, Mrs. Panks, if you don't get up and see to your other children outside, I'll take you to the hospital." It was harsh treatment, and Sally shivered, but he held her eye.

"This minute." The little doctor hauled out his watch.

"You can't, you hain't got no right," cried the poor mother, raising a red, tear-swollen face; for the hospital and the wrench away from her children held manifold terrors.

"I have as a physician absolute right to take you to the hospital in the city, and I shall do it unless you get up instantly and take care of your children. Aren't you ashamed, when they need you?" Even Mrs. Tubbs cringed before him, and she helped her friend to her feet.

"She needs no medicine; she's got to be scared out of herself," he said, as she waddled out, and Mrs. Tubbs pleaded for medical treatment. "And do you go home."

"An' leave her alone? She'll go stark crazy."

"Go home, I say," repeated the doctor,

accustomed to instant obedience. "As long as you are around, and will do the work, she'll collapse. Mind, start now, Mrs. Tubbs."

So Ira Plunkett, exhausted and astonished after all the considerate treatment he had of late received, looked up at last as he lay quiet from sheer lack of breath enough to howl, as she dropped beside his box.

"O Lord," — her long arms were around him, — "if you ever take away my baby, 'twill be dretful mean. Don't, Lord, I couldn't stand it. As true as gospel, I couldn't."

Parson Elwood preached a long discourse over little Susan; for although it was but a child's funeral, no other citizen having consented to furnish the opportunity during several summers, he felt that the city contingent should know his powers along that line.

The villagers said it was "edifyin'." The

summer people outside the Panks cabin oozed off in the sweet September sunshine, to sit on the stone walls, and over in the green fields beyond. The parson, lifting his voice in the doorway, could be heard in all his sonorous periods.

Mrs. Tubbs was on pins and needles. She had brought Ira Plunkett, of course, not daring to leave him at home after the last experience. "Hain't th' man no sense?" she said to herself. "But there, of course, he hain't, bein' a minister. They never'll set it through, all them children."

In the front row was the Panks progeny of all sizes: the girls with hair soaped and tightly braided in tails down their backs, each tied with a wisp of black crape, and the boys with the same mourning emblem at their throats, which Mrs. Panks had insisted on as "payin' proper respec' to Susan."

"I hain't got no crape. Where in Kedar

do you 'xpect me to git it?" Sally said when appealed to.

"You can git it if you want to, Sally," said the widow, with dignity.

So Mrs. Tubbs at last bethought herself of an old woman in the other end of the village, who had quite a possession of mourning clothes, of whom she begged some bits; also the loan of a black shawl with bonnet and veil for the mother.

When Mrs. Panks saw these she was quite overcome. "You're th' best creeter, Sally Tubbs! Now that's just el'gant." At the funeral she sat at the head of the little coffin, and received all condolences in state, as the friends assembled.

"One o' those children is sure to break out, an' then th' whole kit an' kerboodle of 'em'll bust in. I can't hardly stand it myself," communed Sally, her eyes running over the row of small Pankses. "An' then Ira Plunkett'll commence. Oh Lord! why don't th' man stop?"

The Panks brood might have been equal to the strain, in the novelty of the situation and the endeavour to live up to the crape wisps, had not a small boy, one of the summer boarders, chased a chicken across the grass without the window, at last capturing it, which was heralded by a series of unearthly squawks.

"He's got my chicken!" cried the smallest Panks boy. "Lemme git down," kicking violently to right and to left, and breaking in upon the parson's most eloquent periods.

"Set still, you Jonas! don't you know you are at your sister's funeral!" commanded Sally, in a loud whisper. She reached over Ira Plunkett's head and seized the young man's jacket in the rear; his elder brother, very red in the face, doing the same thing. But the decorum of the stiff row of Pankses was broken up by this time, and it was impossible to stop the confusion. Jonas loudly insisted that he should

rescue his chicken, Parson Elwood steadily claiming the right of way, as his voice rose above the din. At last some one carried off the summer boarder's boy — and the squawking ceased.

By this time the disorder had reached Ira Plunkett. He paused one moment on the brink, and then plunged in with a mighty roar.

Mrs. Tubbs gathered him up, whispered to 'Bijah sitting bolt upright, his hair extra oiled, and his linen starched and spotless, "You stay an' see th' thing through," and stalked through the mourning ranks to her own cottage.

She stuffed a generous piece of gingerbread in the wide, roaring mouth. "There, there, stop your cryin'. Oh, my soul an' body! that's th' first time I ever come out o' a fun'ral till 'twas done. I don't blame you, Ira Plunkett, no flesh an' blood could stan' it a minute longer."

EIGHT

THE summer boarders began to drift homeward. Charley Van Wyck was the proud possessor of Harriett Taylor's heart; and one or two other entanglements seemed to be hopeful, as the pleasant inn coterie broke up. Mrs. Van Wyck and Violet were to remain a fortnight longer; the father and son going back to business.

Her father did not release Violet after his good-by kiss till he said, "You are a brave little woman," for she had laid bare all her heart to him one day. That was all; but the girl would not have taken a kingdom for those words.

"Good-by, papa." She turned off singing,

while the lumbering old stage rattled down the hill.

Two days later, a telegram came for Mrs. Van Wyck: "Father died of heart disease this morning. Come immediately. — C. A. Van Wyck."

Mrs. Tubbs, whom the innkeeper's wife summoned in this crisis, found Miss Violet very calm, but her mother was in a pitiful state.

"Better stay back with her," advised Sally; "that woman ain't fit to stir."

But Mrs. Van Wyck became so very much worse at this, that everybody helped forward the departure. A clean, trim body in a white cap and apron jumped out of Richard Blair's trap, that young man following.

"Miss Violet, I took the liberty to bring her," — he found a quiet moment aside, — "you couldn't go without a trained nurse; it isn't safe for your mother."

"And you've been to town for her." His horse was flecked with foam. "How very kind!"

"Don't say a word." He noticed how thin her hand was as she extended it to him, and he took it for a moment, rushed upstairs, and packed his dress-suit case. And at the last moment he joined them at the New York train, having driven himself over after the stage had gone, leaving trap and horse at the livery stable. A letter from Hastings, received in the last mail, was in his pocket. The first lines were, "Fairbrother has landed his heiress; engaged to Miss Schoerbaum, daughter of a rich brewer."

Mrs. Tubbs looked in the glass that morning at her gray hair. "Land o' Goshen! why couldn't it be white?—there's some sense to that; it looks clean. But this clam-soup colour seems dirty 's a pig." She pulled at the offending locks, and slapped

on her bonnet. Her dress bagged in front, for she grew more gaunt every day; Mr. Tubbs, on the other hand, took on flesh, but the "rheumatics" knocked at his bones for admission with greater frequency, till for the most part of the day he sat smoking his corn-cob pipe without the cottage door, or if within, he had one eye on the clock, to tell the blessed hour for dinner. Sally never told him to mind the baby, for that drove him off.

She set forth from the cottage, carrying Ira Plunkett on her arm to the village store, for he went everywhere with her. "Fer heaven's sake, Sally," called the widow Panks over the fence, "give that young one to me, I'll keep him till you git home."

"Thank you, Nancy," — Sally bowed politely, — "but with all your 'xperience, I favour carryin' my baby."

"I won't ask you again," declared the widow, much offended.

"No, you needn't, 'cause I'm always goin' to carry him till his legs stretch an' he walks pretty alongside o' me."

The idlers on the Hillsboro Tavern steps saw her go by, Ira Plunkett on her arm.

"What's that she's got?" A man pushed through the group.

"It's Mis' Tubbs's baby," said two or three Hillsboroites.

"Where'd she git it?"

"Durn it all, how sharp ye can be, Jed, fer news! I don't wonder, seein' ye ben gone so long."

"Where'd she git it?"

Jed Simmons, returned, as he announced, for a few days, was quite a different man from Jed Simmons who narrowly escaped confinement for vagrancy. He had on good clothes, and seemed to have money in his pocket.

They hastened to answer.

"'Twas left to her," said one.

"Quite a fortin'," haw-hawed another.

"Give us th' yarn." Jed squared his shoulders, and his eyes gleamed.

"It's old Abram Plunkett's grandchild."

Jed's hands, hanging by his sides, clenched, and he swore a mighty oath.

"Is that true?" he roared.

"Yes, his darter Jane brung it, then scooted an' left it fer Sally to take care on."

"If you're a-tellin' me wrong, I'll kill ye," said Jed.

They moved off, but remembering how good Sally had been to him, thought after all it wasn't so very strange he should get so excited. He cleared his throat.

"Don't you tell Sally Plunkett I've come back, fer a few days."

"He wants to s'prise her," they explained among themselves.

Then came the telegram that afternoon with the fatal news, and Mrs. Tubbs's hours

and minutes were full getting the Van Wycks off. She left the baby asleep in his box, and came to Mr. Tubbs's side by the cottage door, where the old corn-cob pipe was going full strength.

"'Bijah."

"Yes'm."

"I hate to trouble ye, but I've got to this once. Ye must watch Ira Plunkett. I can't take him down to th' *ho*tel. My senses! ye know I can't. An' ye must be sure now an' don't let him wake up."

"I ain't likely to rouse that young one," said 'Bijah, with deeper scorn than usual. "You comin' home quick?"

"Yes. Well, if he sneezes, you put this over him." Sally brought out from the bedroom the remnants of an old quilt and laid it on the chair next to Mr. Tubbs, where he sat smoking his pipe. "An' don't slap it on, but be real careful, or he'll wake up." She went and hung over the box a minute,

anxiety all over her face. "Well, I've got to go; he'll sleep, I guess. Now, 'Bijah, remember."

Mr. Tubbs remained a long time in perfect silence after his spouse departed. The insects droned without the door over Sally's bright bed of asters, and off in the distance came the sound of the Panks children at play. All else was dreamy and quiet.

"If he sneezes!" 'Bijah exclaimed. "Well, what of it? A cat sneezes, an' 'tain't no ways more important when a baby doos. Now if I don't hear him sneeze, I won't have to cover him up, an' then he won't cry."

This being good reasoning, Mr. Tubbs got out of his chair briskly, and with a guilty glance within, skipped around to the other side of the house. "She'll stay up to th' inn a good spell like enough. When women has to be packed off, 'tain't no easy job. I won't sleep but forty winks." He threw

himself on the grass under the apple trees, and was soon snoring happily.

The latch of Mrs. Tubbs's green door could click, therefore, and no one be the wiser. The man who entered needed no one to tell him that in that box lay his child. And having every right in the sight of the law, he first feasted his eyes on the little face; then proceeded to those other rights of possession.

Ira Plunkett stirred in his sleep. "It's your dad," said Jed, "your dad, who's hungry fer a sight o' your face — your dad as hain't seen you since th' woman who bore you slunk away in th' night. I'd told her to go nex' day, fer she made hell fer you an' me; but she took you unbeknownst — then writ that you was dead." Here followed a string of curses, dreadful to hear anywhere, but unspeakable above a baby's slumber.

"What could I expect: her mother a cir-

cus-girl, an' her father worse yet, though I didn't know 'twas old Plunkett when I married th' girl. He was Jim Isaacs then, an' he had one foot in th' grave; but he lived long enough, it seems, to tell that woman where to go if she got into trouble, an' fasten on to th' darter of th' brother he robbed." He shaded his fierce eyes with a big hand, and gazed at his boy, then shook his fist in rage, turned, and looking out of the small window, saw Mr. Tubbs flat on his back, with mouth wide open, in peaceful rest.

Jed Simmons went out quickly and around the house.

"Here, hello you!" He shook 'Bijah, whose watery eyes roved aimlessly.

"Oh, that you, Jed?" as he came back to consciousness.

"About my size. Git up, I've got somethin' to say to ye, 'Bijah. That baby in there is mine, ye know," pointing with his thumb toward the window.

'Bijah nodded and sat up. "Sally 's ben a-takin' care of th' young one ever sence that woman run away?"

Mr. Tubbs nodded again. Then his little pale eyes gleamed at a mighty idea. "She 's had an orful hard time," he said impressively.

Jed's fingers clutched at a branch on the apple tree and snapped it off.

"She 's gin up her washin' fer th' inn folks," went on 'Bijah, plaintively; "an' she don't sleep nights, an' I d'no how she stands it. An' he just eats orful, an' cries an' bawls, an' Mis' Tubbs is about clear wore out."

"Where is she now?" demanded Ira Plunkett's father.

"I d'no 'xactly." Mr. Tubbs excused himself for this statement by the reflection that it was impossible to know at that precise moment the whereabouts of his spouse. "She's maybe on th' stage; how can I tell?"

he reflected. "If she thought Miss Van Wyck wanted her, like enough she'd drive over to th' deepo' with 'em."

"I did want to see her," said Jed, thoughtfully.

Mr. Tubbs, now thoroughly alarmed, sprang to his feet. "Oh, my soul an' body, Jed Simmons!" he piped in a thin, high voice, "if you're a-goin' to take that baby, an' I s'pose, o' course, you be, seein' it's yourn, you better do it when Sally ain't to home. She thinks she's *got* to take care of it, an' you know when she gits that on her mind, there ain't no doin' nothin' with her."

Didn't he know something of the Plunkett conscience?

"'Nough said." Jed was making for the house.

"I'll help ye," said 'Bijah, on a joyful key, tripping after him.

It was soon done. Strange to say, by some perversity of fate, at this most critical

moment of his life, Ira Plunkett failed to wake up. His little cap that Sally made for his airings, was crammed down over his head, the few articles that appeared to belong to a baby, made into a bundle, and Jed, his boy on his arm, turned to say: "Ye tell her how 'tis. I wanted to see her first."

"I'll tell her." 'Bijah nodded, reserving his rights as to the limits of the story.

"An' my sister from York State is livin' with me an' will take good care of th' boy."

"Yes — yes," said Mr. Tubbs.

* * * * * *

Mrs. Tubbs wiped her hot face on her checked apron as the stage rumbled away. They were not all drops of perspiration; something else made her eyes dim.

"I feel 's if there'd ben a death to my own house. Th' pretty creeter! Well, I hope that Mr. Fairbrother won't never be heard from, for t'other one'll make her th'

best husband, to my way o' thinkin'. But my sakes! I must hurry home. If Ira Plunkett should bawl, what would Mr. Tubbs do?"

She hugged herself with delight, despite her fear this picture conjured up, at the thought of home and husband and baby; and by the time she came in sight of the tiny cottage, she was lost in blissful dreams of the future, and had Ira Plunkett well out of short clothes, and trudging off to the district school with his book and slate.

There sat 'Bijah placidly smoking by the green door.

"An' how thankful I ought to be that I've got my husband, Mr. Tubbs — ain't he nice a-settin' there? What did I ever do without him?"

NINE

MR. TUBBS simply said, "Jed come an' took th' baby," and kept out of Sally's way as much as possible except at mealtime. And there was general rejoicing all over the village at the withdrawal of Ira Plunkett.

"Now that woman'll have some peace." There was but one mind about it.

Mrs. Tubbs was a little late the next morning with her cart to take the soiled clothes left by the Van Wycks; they were to be done up and sent to them at New York. It was a big wash, and the cart was heavy.

Sally's head was bent, and her teeth set

hard. Her face was ashy pale; but she strode on, the twigs in her path snapping under her tread.

Suddenly she dropped the knotted rope, plunged into a thicket of scrub oaks, and tumbled to her knees. "I said you'd be mean, Lord, if you took away my baby. I wrastled all night, an' now I gin up. I take it all back. Of course his dad orter have him. I've got Mr. Tubbs; thank you fer that." She got up, twitched the rope fast in her hard, crooked fingers, and marched on.

Just as everything was to his mind, 'Bijah fell into a bad state. He watched Sally furtively; turned away from several dishes hitherto most alluring, and became peaked again.

Mrs. Tubbs shook with alarm, and plied all her arts to tempt his palate, pinching herself to pay the equivalent to the butcher and the grocer. It was singular that she

discovered about this time that it wasn't healthy for her to eat so much.

"I ain't goin' to church," he said at last, one Sunday when Mrs. Tubbs laid out his clean clothes.

Sally sat right down and folded her hard hands. "You must be sick. I'll git Dr. Blodgett."

"If you go for him, I'll run away." 'Bijah was really savage.

Life without Mr. Tubbs was not to be contemplated. Sally sat numb in her chair.

"I ain't sick," he snarled at her, then went out and actually slammed the door.

She was sitting there when he came in. "What's th' matter?" he asked peevishly.

"Nothin'."

"There is, too. Lord! why don't you spit it out?"

"Nothin', 'Bijah." It was a very meek voice, but Mr. Tubbs wished a volcano had spouted, and he trembled like a leaf.

"Mr. Tubbs, set down in that cheer a minute," Sally pointed to a broken-backed article. "No, not too close, 'cause 'tain't proper now, bein 's things has changed. I've ben thinkin'."

Mr. Tubbs dropped where indicated.

"I see now 'twarn't best that you an' me should merry. I wanted to be Mrs. Tubbs, an' I thought I could take care on you, an', 'Bijah, you was a-livin' on cold pork an' bread that you got Tilly Munson to make fer you. Oh Lord! an' I knew I could give you jest what you hankered after. I honestly did, 'Bijah, 's true 's I set here. An' when you fleshed up, an' got that scarecrow look off you, I says, 'There, Lord, don't you see I knew best?' But I didn't, 'Bijah." Sally's long neck bent till the gray head dropped.

"Well, I must get through." Up came her head. "Mr. Tubbs," she said suddenly, "th' Lord's mightier'n you or me, an' he

let Sally Plunkett go th' length o' her chain, then up she comes. 'Tain't no use talkin', it's got to be did. I'm a-goin' down to Parson Elwood's to see if there ain't some way to unhitch us two."

"Sally! Sally!" shrilled Mr. Tubbs. He ran out of his chair, and over to her, grasping her blue-checked apron.

"No, no," said Mrs. Tubbs, waving him off, "go back to your cheer, Mr. Tubbs. 'Tain't proper 's long 's we're goin' to be unmerried."

"Sally, I want to tell you somethin'. I don't want you to go to th' parson."

"I must, 'Bijah," said his wife, sorrowfully. "'S soon 's I find out how it really is, my dooty p'ints that way."

"You shan't," 'Bijah was seized with sudden strength; "you'll walk over my dead body first."

"I shan't walk over no dead bodies, 'Bijah," said Mrs. Tubbs. "But it's got to

be did. There ain't no use in talkin'. I'll do your cookin' fer you when you go back home; fer of course you can't live here, that would be unproper," — she swallowed hard, — "an' I'll put some paper on your wall, an' fix things up tidy. An' I'll make you pies twict a week an' carry 'em down."

Mr. Tubbs burst out crying like a big baby, and fell on his knees. "Oh Lord, Sally! I ain't never had no peace till you was Mis' Tubbs. I've ben starved, an' everybody looked down on 'Bijah Tubbs, but you. An' I couldn't keep my clothes clean, and they was all rags underneath, an' only a good shirt fer Sunday. An' now you're a-goin'. Boo-hoo-hoo!"

Over Mrs. Tubbs's long face broke a strange light. The gray hair seemed a halo above a radiance that grew more luminous every minute. But it went out suddenly.

"Yes, you've got to go. Oh Lord! you can't never live with me after — after — I

tell you, Sally." A convulsion in his throat made an awful pause. "I'm a sinful man. Oh Lord! I don't darst go to church, Sally. *Mm!* I told Jed Simmons to take that baby. *Mm—m!*" He fell flat to the floor on his face.

Mrs. Tubbs ran and picked him up. "You set here right on my lap, 'Bijah. There, there, don't cry. Oh, Lord 'a' mercy! we're all poor, sinful creeters, an' He knows, an' gives us another chanst, 'Bijah — Mr. Tubbs, listen, an' stop cryin'. P'r'aps 'twas my fault for carin' so much about that baby when I'd got you. An' th' Lord thought Jed had better come an' get him, bein 's he's his father."

"But I as good as told a lie."

"I know, 'Bijah, that's awful, I ain't a-denyin' that, an' you'll have to work on your knees a good spell to make it up with th' Lord. But 'tain't right fer me to *de*sert you, 'Bijah," — she stroked his poor bald

head,—"an' gin you up, because you fell from grace. My land, ain't I steeped in evil! ain't all us poor mortals born unto sin and in th' ways thereof! So as you're really glad I'm Mrs. Tubbs, it's my dooty to stay."

"If you warn't Mrs. Tubbs," said 'Bijah, sniffling hard, "I'd feel dretful. An' 'tain't th' pies neither. You've ben real good to me, Sally, an' I ain't goin' to have rheumatics no more."

Mr. and Mrs. Tubbs were late to church that one Sunday morning. Parson Elwood took her to task for it in the intermission, but she bore it with an airy indifference. "Couldn't seem to make it convenient to git here no sooner," she said calmly.

When Jed Simmons's letter came inside a bright red shawl for Sally, Mrs. Tubbs sat immediately down and answered it, thanking him for writing her such pretty words for what she'd done for the baby, and how she knew 'twas natural he wanted his boy,

and how she hoped he'd grow up like her father, and would he please see that Ira Plunkett didn't forget her, and keep flannel on his stomach when the weather turned cold. "Though p'r'aps you'll change his name now, bein 's he warn't baptized," the letter ended. "I should take it real polite if you wouldn't; but mebbe you want somethin' from th' Simmons side."

Mrs. Tubbs was submerged in joy when a letter came back. Jed said after all she'd done for him, and all her father had suffered, he reckoned it a pity if the name shouldn't stick to the boy. So he and his sister had taken the child to church last Sunday, and there he was at the present moment, Ira Plunkett, fast and sure, kicking up his heels on the kitchen floor; and he (Jed) would do his liveliest to make him grow up a good boy, and not in the very slightest particular to resemble that old scoundrel his granddad.

And Sally laughed and cried over this,

and tucked the letter into her "Pilgrim's Progress" on the centre-table. And every Sunday afternoon 'Bijah and she would take it out and read it over and over, under the photograph framed in shells and pine cones, where she and Mr. Tubbs were holding each other's hands.

"It looks nice now, don't it?" said 'Bijah once, and slowly regarding the photograph.

"Didn't she say so — the pretty creeter?" beamed Sally. "Well, now, I wish her courtin' was fixed up as nice as mine, 'Bijah," and she sighed.

But "her courtin'" gave no such promise. Mrs. Tubbs heard nothing more after the first sad epistles from New York, until a long letter came from Geneva, and another from England that told of the Van Wyck journeyings. At last came a tiny one.

"DEAR MRS. TUBBS: My husband and I reached home last week." Mrs. Tubbs

dropped the letter. "Read it through, Sally." 'Bijah picked it up.

"No, you read it. I'm all of a tremble. An' so she's merried. How I do wish 'twas to t'other one!"

"We were married in England," read Mr. Tubbs, slowly, "and left mamma over there with Charley and his wife. I'm the happiest woman in the world."

"No, she ain't," said Mrs. Tubbs, decidedly.

"And I see things differently now from what they appeared to a foolish girl. Well, I will tell you all about it, for my husband and I are going down to the dear old place for a few days, and I want to see my dear Mrs. Tubbs, so good-by till then.

"Affectionately,

"VIOLET VAN WYCK BLAIR."

"*Blair!*" screamed Mrs. Tubbs. "You hain't read it right, 'Bijah," snatching at the letter.

"She's writ Blair," said Mr. Tubbs, "an' I s'pose she knows," relinquishing it.

"Oh my Lord!" cried Sally in a transport, "t'other one's got her, 'Bijah!" She seized both of his thin little hands. "I ain't never goin' to disbelieve th' Lord again. He's kinder roundabout, sometimes, but He gits there; an' you an' I must buckle to an' do things fer Him. But, my land!" — she sprang from her chair — "th' apple pies is all out, an' here I set."