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by Josiah Allen's Wife (Marietta Holley)

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SAMANTHA

AMONG THE BRETHREN.

By

"Josiah Allen's Wife"

(Marietta Holley)

Part 3

CHAPTER VII.

But along about the middle of the fifth week I see a change. Lodema had been uncommon exasperatin', and I expected she would set Josiah to goin', and I groaned in spirit, to think what a job wuz ahead of me, to part their two tongues--when all of a sudden I see a curius change come

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over my pardner's face.

I remember jest the date that the change in his mean wuz visible, and made known to me--for it wuz the very mornin' that we got the invitation to old Mr. and Miss Pressley's silver weddin'. And that wuz the fifteenth day of the month along about the middle of the forenoon.

And it wuz not half an hour after Elnathen Pressley came to the door and give us the invitations, that I see the change in his mean.

And when I asked him about it afterwards, what that strange and curius look meant, he never hung back a mite from tellin' me, but sez right out plain:

"Mebby, Samantha, I hain't done exactly as I ort to by cousin Lodema, and I have made up my mind to make her a happy surprise before she goes away."

"Wall," sez I, "so do."

I thought he wuz goin' to get her a new dress. She had been a-hintin' to him dretful strong to that effect. She wanted a parmetty, or a balzereen, or a circassien, which wuz in voge in her young days. But I wuz in hopes he would get her a cashmere, and told him so, plain.

But I couldn't get him to tell what the surprise wuz. He only sez, sez he:

"I am goin' to make her a happy surprise."

And the thought that he wuz a-goin' to branch out and make a change, wuz considerable of a comfort to me. And I needed comfort--yes, indeed I did--I needed it bad. For not one single thing did I do for her that I done right, though I tried my best to do well by her.

But she found fault with my vittles from mornin' till night, though I am called a excellent cook all over Jonesville, and all round the adjoining country, out as far as Loontown, and Zoar. It has come straight back to me by them that wouldn't lie. But it hain't made me vain.

But I never cooked a thing that suited Lodema, not a single thing. Most of my vittles wuz too fresh, and then if I braced up and salted 'em extra so as to be sure to please her, why then they wuz briny, and hurt her mouth.

Why, if you'll believe it, I give her a shawl, made her a present of it; it had even checks black and white, jest as many threads in the black stripes as there wuz in the white, for I counted 'em.

And she told me, after she had looked it all over and said it wuz kinder thin and slazy, and checkered shawls had gone out of fashion, and the black looked some as if it would fade with washin', and the white wuzn't over clear, and the colors wuzn't no ways becomin' to her complexion, and etcetery, etcetery.

"But," sez she, after she had got all through with the rest of her complaints--"if the white stripes wuz where the black wuz, and the black where the white wuz, she should like it quite well." And there it wuz, even check, two and two. Wall, that wuz a sample of her doin's. If

anybody had a Roman nose she wanted a Greecy one.

[Illustration: "IF THE WHITE STRIPES WUZ WHERE THE BLACK WUZ."]

And if the nose wuz Greece, why then she wanted Rome.

Why, Josiah sez to me along about the third week, he said (to ourselves, in private), "that if Lodema went to Heaven she would be dissatisfied with it, and think it wuz livelier, and more goin' on down to the other place." And he said she would get the angels all stirred up a findin' fault with their feathers.

I told him "I would not hear such talk."

"Wall," sez he, "don't you believe it?"

And I kinder turned him off, and wouldn't tell, and told him it wuz wicked to talk so.

"Wall," sez Josiah, "you dassent say she wouldn't."

And I dassent, though I wouldn't own it up to him, I dassent.

And if she kinder got out of other occupations for a minute durin' them first weeks she would be a quarrelin' with Josiah Allen about age.

I s'pose she and Josiah wuzn't far from the same age, for they wuz children together. But she wanted to make out she wuz young.

And she would tell Josiah that "he seemed jest like a father to her, and always had." And sometimes when she felt the most curius, she would call him "Father," and "Pa," and "Papa." And it would mad Josiah Allen so that I would have all I could do to quell him down.

Now I didn't feel so, I didn't mind it so much. Why, there would be days, when she felt the curiusest, that she would call me "Mother," and "Ma," and foller me round with foot-stools and things, when I went to set down, and would kinder worry over my fallin' off the back step, and would offer to help me up the suller stairs, and so forth, and watchin' over what I et, and tellin' me folks of my age ort to be careful, and not over-eat.

And Josiah asked me to ask her "How she felt about that time?" For she wuz from three to four years older than I wuz.

But I wouldn't contend with her, and the footstools come kinder handy, I had jest as lieve have 'em under my feet as not, and ruther. And as for rich vittles not agreein' with me, and my not over-eatin', I broke that tip by fallin' right in with her, and not cookin' such good things--that quelled her down, and gauded Josiah too.

But, as I said, it riled Josiah the worst of anything to have Lodema call him father, for he wants to make out that he is kinder young himself.

And sez he to her one day, about the third week, when she was a-goin' on about how good and fatherly he looked, and how much he seemed like a parent to her, and always had, sez he: "I wonder if I seemed like a father to you when we wuz a-kickin' at each other in the same cradle?"

Sez he: "We both used to nuss out of the same bottle, any way, for I have heard my mother say so lots of times. There wuzn't ten days' difference in our ages. You wuz ten days the oldest as I have always made out."

She screamed right out, "Why, Josiah Allen, where is your conscience to talk in that way--and your heart?"

"In here, where everybody's is," sez Josiah, strikin' himself with his right hand--he meant to strike against his left breast, but struck too low, kinder on his stomach.

And sez I, "That is what I have always thought, Josiah Allen. I have always had better luck reachin' your conscience through your stomach than in any other way. And now," sez I coldly, "do you go out and bring in a pail of water."

I used to get beat out and sick of their scufflin's and disagreein's, and broke 'em up whenever I could.

But oh! oh! how she did quarrel with Josiah Allen and that buzz saw scheme of his'n. How light she made of that enterprise, how she demeaned the buzz, and run the saws--till I felt that bad as I hated the enterprise myself, I felt that a variety of loud buzz saws would be a welcome relief from her tongue--from their two tongues; for as fur down as she would run them buzz saws, jest so fur would Josiah Allen praise 'em up.

[Illustration: LODEMA AND JOSIAH IN YOUTH.]

She never agreed with Josiah Allen but in jest one thing while she was under his ruff. I happened to mention one day how extremely anxious I wuz to have females set on the Conference; and then, wantin' to dispute me, and also bein' set on that side, she run down the project, and called it all to nort--and when too late she see that she had got over on Josiah Allen's side of the fence.

But it had one good effect. When that man see she wuz there, he waded off, way out of sight of the project, and wouldn't mention it--it madded him so to be on the same side of the fence she wuz--so that it seemed to happen all for the best.

Why, I took her as a dispensation from the first, and drawed all sorts of morels from her, and sights of 'em--sights.

But oh, it wuz tuff on me, fearful tuff.

And when she calculated and laid out to make out her visit and go, wuz more than we could tell.

## CHAPTER VIII.

For two weeks had passed away like a nite mair of the nite--and three weeks, and four weeks--and she didn't seem to be no nigher goin' than she did when she came.

And I would not make a move towards gettin' rid of her, not if I had dropped down in my tracts, because she wuz one of the relatives on his side.

But I wuz completely fagged out; it did seem, as I told Tirzah Ann one day in confidence, "that I never knew the meanin' of the word 'fag' before."

And Tirzah Ann told me (she couldn't bear her) that if she wuz in my place, she would start her off. Sez she:

"She has plenty of brothers and sisters, and a home of her own, and why should she come here to torment you and father;" and sez she, "I'll talk to her, mother, I'd jest as leve as not." Sez I, "Tirzah Ann, if you say a word to her, I'll--I'll never put confidence in you agin;" sez I, "Life is full of tribulations, and we must expect to bear our crosses;" sez I, "The old martyrs went through more than Lodema."

Sez Tirzah Ann, "I believe Lodema would have wore out John Rogers."

And I don't know but she would, but I didn't encourage her by ownin' it up that she would; but I declare for't, I believe she would have been more tegus than the nine children, and the one at the breast, any way.

Wall, as I said, it wuz durin' the fifth week that Josiah Allen turned right round, and used her first rate.

And when she would talk before folks about how much filial affection she had for him, and about his always havin' been jest like a parent to her, and everything of the kind--he never talked back a mite, but looked clever, and told me in confidence, "That he had turned over a new leaf, and he wuz goin' to surprise her--give her a happy surprise."

And he seemed, instead of lovin' to rile her up, as he had, to jest put his hull mind on the idee of the joyful surprise.

Wall, I am always afraid (with reason) of Josiah Allen's enterprizes. But do all I could, he wouldn't tell me one word about what he wuz goin' to do, only he kep it up, kep a-sayin' that,

"It wuz somethin' I couldn't help approvin' of, and it wuz somethin' that would happify me, and be a solid comfort to her, and a great gain and honor."

So (though I trembled some for the result) I had to let it go on, for she wuz one of the relations on his own side, and I knew it wouldn't do for me to interfere too much, and meddle.

Why, he did come right out one day and give hints to me to that effect.

Sez I, "Why do you go on and be so secret about it? Why don't you tell your companion all about it, what you are a-goin' to do, and advise with her?"

And he sez, "I guess I know what I am about. She is one of the relations on my side, and I guess I have got a few rights left, and a little spunk."

"Yes," sez I, sadly, "you have got the spunk."

"Wall," sez he, "I guess I can spunk up, and do somethin' for one of my own relations, without any interference or any advice from any of the Smith family, or anybody else."

Sez I, "I don't want to stop your doin' all you can for Lodema, but why not tell what you are a-goin' to do?"

"It will be time enough when the time comes," sez he. "You will find it out in the course of next week."

Wall, it run along to the middle of the next week. And one day I had jest sot down to tie off a comforter.

It wuz unbleached cheese cloth that I had bought and colored with tea leaves. It wuz a sort of a light mice color, a pretty soft gray, and I wuz goin' to tie it in with little balls of red zephyr woosted, and work it in buttonhole stitch round the edge with the same.

It wuz fur our bed, Josiah's and mine, and it wuz goin' to be soft and warm and very pretty, though I say it, that shouldn't.

[Illustration: "I HAD JEST SOT DOWN TO TIE OFF A COMFORTER."]

It wuzn't quite so pretty as them that hain't colored. I had 'em for my spare beds, cream color tied with pale blue and pink, that wuz perfectly beautiful and very dressy; but I thought for everyday use a colored one would be better.

Wall, I had brought it out and wuz jest a-goin' to put it onto the frames (some new-fashioned ones I had borrowed from Tirzah Ann for the occasion).

And Cousin Lodema had jest observed, "that the new-fashioned frames with legs wuzn't good for nothin', and she didn't like the color of gray, it looked too melancholy, and would be apt to depress our feelin's too much, and would be tryin' to our complexions."

And I told her "that I didn't spoze there would be a very great congregation in our bedroom, as a general thing in the dead of night, to see whether it wuz becomin' to Josiah and me or not. And, it bein' as dark as Egypt, our complexions wouldn't make a very bad show any way."

"Wall," she said, "to tie it with red wuzn't at all appropriate, it wuz too dressy a color for folks of our age, Josiah's and mine." "Why," sez she, "even \_I\_, at \_my\_ age, would skurcely care to sleep under one so gay. And she wouldn't have a cheese cloth comforter any way." She sort o' stopped to ketch breath, and Josiah sez:

"Oh, wall, Lodema, a cheese cloth comforter is better than none, and I should think you would be jest the one to like any sort of a frame on legs."

But I wunk at him, a real severe and warnin' wink, and he stopped short off, for all the world as if he had forgot bein' on his good behavior; he stopped short off, and went right to behavin', and sez he to me:

"Don't put on your comforter to-day, Samantha, for Tirzah Ann and

Whitfield and the babe are a-comin' over here bimeby, and Maggie is a-comin', and Thomas Jefferson."

"Wall," sez I, "that is a good reason why I should keep on with it; the girls can help me if I don't get it off before they get here."

And then he sez, "Miss Minkley is a-comin', too, and the Elder."

"Why'ee," sez I, "Josiah Allen, why didn't you tell me before, so I could have baked up somethin' nice? What a man you are to keep things; how long have you known it?"

"Oh, a week or so!"

"A week!" sez I; "Josiah Allen, where is your conscience? if you have got a conscience."

"In the same old place," sez he, kinder hittin' himself in the pit of his stomach.

"Wall, I should think as much," sez I.

And Lodema sez, sez she: "A man that won't tell things is of all creeters that walks the earth the most disagreeable. And I should think the girls, Maggie and Tirzah Ann, would want to stay to home and clean house such a day as this is. And I should think a Elder would want to stay to home so's to be on hand in case of anybody happenin' to be exercised in their minds, and wantin to talk to him on religious subjects. And if I wuz a Elder's wife, I should stay to home with him; I should think it wuz my duty and my privilege. And if I wuz a married woman, I would have enough baked up in the house all the time, so's not to be afraid of company."

But I didn't answer back. I jest sot away my frames, and went out and stirred up a cake; I had one kind by me, besides cookies and jell tarts.

But I felt real worked up to think I hadn't heard. Wall, I hadn't more'n got that cake fairly into the oven when the children come, and Elder Minkley and his wife. And I thought they looked queer, and I thought the Elder begun to tell me somethin', and I thought I see Josiah wink at him. But I wouldn't want to take my oath whether he wunk or not, but I \_thought\_ he wunk.

I wuz jest a turnin' this over in my mind, and a carryin' away their things, when I glanced out of the settin' room winder, and lo, and behold! there wuz Abi Adsit a comin' up to the front door, and right behind her wuz her Pa and Ma Adsit, and Deacon Henzy and his wife, and Miss Henn and Metilda, and Lute Pitkins and his wife, and Miss Petengill, and Deacon Sypher and Drusilly, and Submit Tewksbury--a hull string of 'em as long as a procession.

Sez I, and I spoke it right out before I thought--sez I--

"Why'ee!" sez I. "For the land's sake!" sez I, "has there been a funeral, or anything? And are these the mourners?" sez I. "Are they stoppin' here to warm?"

For it wuz a cold day--and I repeated the words to myself mechanically as it wuz, as I see 'em file up the path.



"They be mourners, hain't they?"

"No," sez Josiah, who had come in and wuz a standin' by the side of me, as I spoke out to myself unbeknown to me--sez he in a proud axent--

"No, they hain't mourners, they are Happyfiers; they are Highlariers; they have come to our party. We are givin' a party, Samantha. We are havin' a diamond weddin' here for Lodema."

"A diamond weddin'!" I repeated mechanically.

"Yes, this is my happy surprise for Lodema."

I looked at Lodema Trumble. She looked strange. She had sunk back in her chair. I thought she wuz a-goin' to faint, and she told somebody the next day, "that she did almost lose her conscientiousness."

"Why," sez I, "she hain't married."

[Illustration: "WE ARE GIVIN' A PARTY, SAMANTHA."]

"Wall, she ort to be, if she hain't," sez he. "I say it is high time for her to have some sort of a weddin'. Everybody is a havin' 'em--tin, and silver and wooden, and basswood, and glass, and etc.--and I thought it wuz a perfect shame that Lodema shouldn't have none of no kind--and I thought I'd lay to, and surprise her with one. Every other man seemed to be a-holdin' off, not willin' seemin'ly that she should have one, and I jest thought I would happify her with one."

"Wall, why didn't you make her a silver one, or a tin?" sez I.

"Or a paper one!" screamed Lodema, who had riz up out of her almost faintin' condition. "That would have been much more appropriate," sez she.

"Wall, I thought a diamond one would be more profitable to her. For I asked 'em all to bring diamonds, if they brought anything. And then I thought it would be more suitable to her age."

"Why!" she screamed out. "They have to be married seventy-five years before they can have one."

"Yes," sez he dreemily, "I thought that would be about the right figure."

Lodema wuz too mad to find fault or complain or anything. She jest marched up-stairs and didn't come down agin that night. And the young folks had a splendid good time, and the old ones, too.

Tirzah Ann and Maggie had brought some refreshments with 'em, and so had some of the other wimmen, and, with what I had, there wuz enough, and more than enough, to refresh ourselves with.

Wall, the very next mornin' Lodema marched down like a grenideer, and ordered Josiah to take her to the train. And she eat breakfast with her things on, and went away immedgiately after, and hain't been back here sense.

And I wuz truly glad to see her go, but wuz sorry she went in such a way, and I tell Josiah he wuz to blame,

But he acts as innocent as you please. And he goes all over the arguments agin every time I take him to do about it. He sez "she wuz old enough to have a weddin' of some kind."

And of course I can't dispute that, when he faces me right down, and sez:

"Hain't she old enough?"

And I'll say, kinder short--

"Why, I spoze so!"

"Wall," sez he, "wouldn't it have been profitable to her if they had brought diamonds? Wouldn't it have been both surprisin' and profitable?" And sez he, "I told 'em expressly to bring diamonds if they had more than they wanted. I charged old Bobbet and Lute Pitkins specially on the subject. I didn't want 'em to scrimp themselves; but," sez I, "if you have got more diamonds than you want, Lute, bring over a few to Lodema."

[Illustration: "IF YOU HAVE GOT MORE DIAMONDS THAN YOU WANT."]

"Yes," sez I, coldly, "he wuz dretful likely to have diamonds more then he wanted, workin' out by day's work to support his family. You know there wuzn't a soul you invited that owned a diamond."

"How did I know what they owned? I never have prowled round into their bureau draws and things, tryin' to find out what they had; they might have had quarts of 'em, and I not know it."

Sez I, "You did it to make fun of Lodema and get rid of her. And it only makes it worse to try to smooth it over." Sez I, "I'd be honorable about it if I wuz in your place, and own up."

"Own up? What have I got to own up? I shall always say if my orders wuz carried out, it would have been a profitable affair for Lodema, and it would--profitable and surprisin'."

And that is all I can get him to say about it, from that day to this.

## CHAPTER IX.

But truly the labors that descended onto my shoulders immedgiately after Lodema's departure wuz hard enough to fill up my hull mind, and tax every one of my energies.

Yes, my labors and the labors of the other female Jonesvillians wuz deep and arjuous in the extreme (of which more and anon bimeby).

I had been the female appinted in a private and becomin' female way, to go to Loontown to see the meetin' house there that we heard they had fixed over in a cheap but commojous way. And for reasons (of which more

and anon) we wanted to inquire into the expense, the looks on't, etc., etc.

So I persuaded Josiah Allen to take me over to Loontown on this pressin' business, and he gin his consent to go on the condition that we should stop for a visit to Cephas Bodley'ses. Josiah sets store by 'em. You see they are relations of ourn and have been for some time, entirely unbeknown to us, and they'd come more'n a year ago a huntin' of us up. They said they "thought relations ought to be hunted up and hanged together." They said "the idea of huntin' us up had come to 'em after readin' my books." They told me so, and I said, "Wall!" I didn't add nor diminish to that one "wall," for I didn't want to act too backward, nor too forward. I jest kep' kinder neutral, and said, "Wall!"

You see Cephas'ses father's sister-in-law wuz stepmother to my aunt's second cousin on my father's side. And Cephas said that "he had felt more and more, as years went by, that it wuz a burnin' shame for relations to not know and love each other." He said "he felt that he loved Josiah and me dearly."

I didn't say right out whether it wuz reciprokated or not I kinder said, "Wall!" agin.

And I told Josiah, in perfect confidence and the wood-house chamber, "that I had seen nearer relations than Mr. Bodley'ses folks wuz to us,"

[Illustration: "CEPHAS SAID IT WUZ A BURNIN' SHAME FOR RELATIONS TO NOT KNOW AND LOVE EACH OTHER."]

Howsomever, I done well by 'em. Josiah killed a fat turkey, and I baked it, and done other things for their comfort, and we had quite a good time. Cephas wuz ruther flowery and enthusiastick, and his mouth and voice wuz ruther large, but he meant well, I should judge, and we had quite a good time.

She wuz very freckled, and a second-day Baptist by perswasion, and wuz piecin' up a crazy bedquilt. She went a-visitin' a good deal, and got pieces of the women's dresses where she visited for blocks. So it wuz quite a savin' bedquilt, and very good-lookin', considerin'.

But to resoom and continue on. Cephas'ses folks made us promise on our two sacred honors, Josiah's honor and mine, that we would pay back the visit, for, as Cephas said, "for relatives to live so clost to each other, and not to visit back and forth, wuz a burnin' shame and a disgrace." And Josiah promised that we would go right away after sugerin'.

We wouldn't promise on the New Testament, as Cephas wanted us to (he is dretful enthusiastick); but we gin good plain promises that we would go, and laid out to keep our two words.

Wall, we got there onexpected, as they had come onto us. And we found 'em plunged into trouble. Their only child, a girl, who had married a young lawyer of Loontown, had jest lost her husband with the typhus, and they wuz a-makin' preparations for the funeral when we got there. She and her husband had come on a visit, and he wuz took down bed-sick there and died.

I told 'em I felt like death to think I had descended down onto 'em at

such a time.

But Cephas said he wuz jest dispatchin' a messenger for us when we arrove, for, he said, "in a time of trouble, then wuz the time, if ever, that a man wanted his near relations clost to him."

And he said "we had took a load offen him by appearin' jest as we did, for there would have been some delay in gettin' us there, if the messenger had been dispatched."

He said "that mornin' he had felt so bad that he wanted to die--it seemed as if there wuzn't nothin' left for him to live for; but now he felt that he had sunthin' to live for, now his relatives wuz gathered round him."

Josiah shed tears to hear Cephas go on. I myself didn't weep none, but I wuz glad if we could be any comfort to 'em, and told 'em so.

And I told Sally Ann, that wuz Cephas's wife, that I would do anything I could to help 'em. And she said everything wuz a-bein' done that wuz necessary. She didn't know of but one thing that wuz likely to be overlooked and neglected, and that wuz the crazy bedquilt. She said "she would love to have that finished to throw over a lounge in the settin'-room, that wuz frayed out on the edges, and if I felt like it, it would be a great relief to her to have me take it right offen her hands and finish it."

So I took out my thimble and needle (I always carry such necessaries with me, in a huzzy made expressly for that purpose), and I sot down and went to piecin' up. There wuz seventeen blocks to piece up, each one crazy as a loon to look at, and it wuz all to set together.

She had the pieces, for she had been off on a visitin' tower the week before, and collected of 'em.

So I sot in quiet and the big chair in the settin'-room, and pieced up, and see the preparations goin' on round us.

I found that Cephas's folks lived in a house big and showy-lookin', but not so solid and firm as I had seen.

It wuz one of the houses, outside and inside, where more pains had been took with the porticos and ornaments than with the underpinnin'.

It had a showy and kind of a shaky look. And I found that that extended to Cephas's business arrangements. Amongst the other ornaments of his buildin's wuz mortgages, quite a lot of'em, and of almost every variety. He had gin his only child, S. Annie (she wuz named after her mother, Sally Ann, but spelt it this way), he had gin S. Annie a showy education, a showy weddin', and a showy settin'-out. But she had had the good luck to marry a sensible man, though poor.

[Illustration: "So I SOT IN QUIET AND THE BIG CHAIR."]

He took S. Annie and the brackets, the piano and hangin' lamps and baskets and crystal bead lambrequins, her father had gin her, moved 'em all into a good, sensible, small house, and went to work to get a practice and a livin'. He was a lawyer by perswasion.

Wall, he worked hard, day and night, for three little children come to 'em pretty fast, and S. Annie consumed a good deal in trimmin's and cheap lace to ornament 'em; she wuz her father's own girl for ornament. But he worked so hard, and had so many irons in the fire, and kep' 'em all so hot, that he got a good livin' for 'em, and begun to lay up money towards buyin' 'em a house--a home.

He talked a sight, so folks said that knew him well, about his consumin' desire and aim to get his wife and children into a little home of their own, into a safe little haven, where they could live if he wuz called away. They say that that wuz on his mind day and night, and wuz what nerved his hand so in the fray, and made him so successful. Wall, he had laid up about nine hundred dollars towards a home, every dollar on it earned by hard work and consecrated by this deathless hope and affection. The house he had got his mind on only cost about a thousand dollars. Loontown property is cheap.

Wall, he had laid up nine hundred, and wuz a-beginnin' to save on the last hundred, for he wouldn't run in debt a cent any way, when he wuz took voyalent sick there to Cephas'ses; he and S. Annie had come home for a visit of a day or two, and he bein' so run down, and weak with his hard day work and his night work, that he suckumbed to his sickness, and passed away the day before I got there.

Wall, S. Annie wuz jest overcome with grief the day I got there, but the day follerin' she begun to take some interest and help her father in makin' preparations for the funeral.

The body wuz embalmed, accordin' to Cephas'ses and S. Annie's wish, and the funeral wuz to be on the Sunday follerin', and on that Cephas and S. Annie now bent their energies.

To begin with, S. Annie had a hull suit of clear crape made for herself, with a veil that touched the ground; she also had three other suits commenced, for more common wear, trimmed heavy with crape, one of which she ordered for sure the next week, for she said, "she couldn't stir out of the house in any other color but black."

I knew jest how dear crape wuz, and I tackled her on the subject, and sez I--

"Do you know, S. Annie, these dresses of your'n will cost a sight?"

"Cost?" sez she, a-bustin' out a-cryin'. "What do I care about cost? I will do everything I can to respect his memory. I do it in remembrance of him."

Sez I, gently, "S. Annie, you wouldn't forget him if you wuz dressed in white. And as for respect, such a life as his, from all I hear of it, don't need crape to throw respect on it; it commands respect, and gets it from everybody."

"But," sez Cephas, "it would look dretful odd to the neighbors if she didn't dress in black." Sez he in a skairful tone, and in his intense way--

[Illustration: "WHAT IS LIFE WORTH WHEN FOLKS TALK?"]

"I would ruther resk my life than to have her fail in duty in this way;

it would make talk. And." sez he, "what is life worth when folks talk?" I turned around the crazed block and tackled it in a new place (more lunny than ever it seemed to me), and sez I, mekanickly--

"It is pretty hard work to keep folks from talkin'; to keep 'em from sayin' somethin'."

But I see from their looks it wouldn't do to say anything more, so I had to set still and see it go on.

At that time of year flowers wuz dretful high, but S. Annie and Cephas had made up their minds that they must have several flower-pieces from the city nighest to Loontown.

One wuz a-goin' to be a gate ajar, and one wuz to be a gate wide open, and one wuz to be a big book. Cephas asked what book I thought would be preferable to represent. And I mentioned the Bible.

But Cephas sez, "No, he didn't think he would have a Bible; he didn't think it would be appropriate, seein' the deceased wuz a lawyer." He said "he hadn't quite made up his mind what book to have. But anyway it wuz to be in flowers--beautiful flowers." Another piece wuz to be his name in white flowers on a purple background of pansies. His name wuz Wellington Napoleon Bonaparte Hardiman. And I sez to Cephas--"To save expense, you will probable have the moneygram W.N.B.H.?"

"Oh, no," sez he.

Sez I, "hen the initials of his given names, and the last name in full."

"Oh, no," he said; "it wuz S. Annie's wish, and hisen, that the hull name should be put on. They thought it would show more respect."

I sez, "Where Wellington is now, that hain't a goin' to make any difference, and," sez I, "Cephas, flowers are dretful high this time of year, and it is a long name."

But Cephas said agin that he didn't care for expense, so long as respect wuz done to the memory of the deceased. He said that he and S. Annie both felt that it wuz their wish to have the funeral go ahead of any other that had ever took place in Loontown or Jonesville. He said that S. Annie felt that it wuz all that wuz left her now in life, the memory of such a funeral as he deserved.

Sez I, "There is his children left for her to live for," sez I--"three little bits of his own life, for her to nourish, and cherish, and look out for."

"Yes," sez Cephas, "and she will do that nobly, and I will help her. They are all goin' to the funeral, too, in deep-black dresses." He said "they wuz too little to realize it now, but in later and maturer years it would be a comfort to 'em to know they had took part in such a funeral as that wuz goin' to be, and wuz dressed in black."

"Wall," sez I (in a quiet, onassumin' way I would gin little hints of my mind on the subject), "I am afraid that will be about all the comforts of life the poor little children will ever have," sez I. "It will be if you buy many more flower-pieces and crape dresses."

Cephas said "it wouldn't take much crape for the children's dresses, they wuz so little, only the baby's; that would have to be long."

Sez I, "The baby would look better in white, and it will take sights of crape for a long baby dress."

"Yes, but S. Annie can use it afterwards for veils. She is very economical; she takes it from me. And she feels jest as I do, that the baby must wear it in respect to her father's memory."

Sez I, "The baby don't know crape from a clothes-pin."

"No," sez Cephas, "but in after years the thought of the respect she showed will sustain her."

"Wall," sez I, "I guess she won't have much besides thoughts to live on, if things go on in this way."

I would give little hints in this way, but they wuzn't took. Things went right on as if I hadn't spoke. And I couldn't contend, for truly, as a bad little boy said once on a similar occasion, "it wuzn't my funeral," so I had to set and work on that insane bedquilt and see it go on. But I sithed constant and frequent, and when I wuz all alone in the room I indulged in a few low groans.

## CHAPTER X.

We dressmakers wuz in the house, to stay all the time till the dresses wuz done; and clerks would come around, anon, if not oftener, with packages of mournin' goods, and mournin' jewelry, and mournin' handkerchiefs, and mournin' stockings, and mournin' stockin'-supporters, and mournin' safety-pins, and etc., etc., etc., etc., etc.

Every one of 'em, I knew, a-wrenchin' boards offen the sides of that house that Wellington had worked so hard to get for his wife and little ones.

Wall, the day of the funeral come. It wuz a wet, drizzly day, but Cephas wuz up early, to see that everything wuz as he wanted it to be.

As fur as I wuz concerned, I had done my duty, for the crazy bedquilt wuz done; and though brains might totter as they looked at it, I felt that it wuzn't my fault. Sally Ann spread it out with complacency over the lounge, and thanked me, with tears in her eyes, for my noble deed.

Along quite early in the mornin', before the show commenced, I went in to see Wellington.

He lay there calm and peaceful, with a look on his face as if he had got away at last from a atmosphere of show and sham, and had got into the great Reality of life.

It wuz a good face, and the worryment and care that folks told me had been on it for years had all faded away. But the look of determination,

and resolve, and bravery,--that wuz ploughed too deep in his face to be smoothed out, even by the mighty hand that had lain on it. The resolved look, the brave look with which he had met the warfare of life, toiled for victory over want, toiled to place his dear and helpless ones in a position of safety,--that look wuz on his face yet, as if the deathless hope and endeavor had gone on into eternity with him.

And by the side of him, on a table, wuz the big high flower-pieces, beginnin' already to wilt and decay.

Wall, it's bein' such an uncommon bad day, there wuzn't many to the funeral. But we rode to the meetin'-house in Loontown in a state and splendor that I never expect to again. Cephas had hired eleven mournin' coaches, and the day bein' so bad, and so few a-turnin' out to the funeral, that in order to occupy all the coaches--and Cephas thought it would look better and more popular to have 'em all occupied--we divided up, and Josiah went in one, alone, and lonesome as a dog, as he said afterwards to me. And I sot up straight and oncomfortable in another one on 'em, stark alone.

Cephas had one to himself, and his wife another one, and two old maids, sisters of Cephas'ses who always made a point of attendin' funerals, they each one of 'em had one. S. Annie and her children, of course, had the first one, and then the minister had one, and one of the trustees in the neighborhood had another; so we lengthened out into quite a crowd, all a-follerin' the shiny hearse, and the casket all covered with showy plated nails. I thought of it in jest that way, for Wellington, I knew, the real Wellington, wuzn't there. No, he wuz fur away--as fur as the Real is from the Unreal. Wall, we filed into the Loontown meetin'-house in pretty good shape. The same meetin'-house I had been sent to reconoiter. But Cephas hadn't no black handkerchief, and he looked worried about it. He had shed tears a-tellin' me about it, what a oversight it wuz, while I wuz a fixin' on his mournin' weed. He took it into his head to have a deeper weed at the last minute, so I fixed it on. He had the weed come up to the top of his hat and lap over. I never see so tall a weed. But it suited Cephas; he said "he thought it showed deep respect."

"Wall," sez I, "it is a deep weed, anyway--the deepest I ever see." And he said as I wuz a sewin' it on, he a-holdin' his hat for me, "that Wellington deserved it; he deserved it all."

But, as I say, he shed tears to think that his handkerchief wuzn't black-bordered. He said "it wuz a fearful oversight; it would probably make talk."

"But," I sez, "mebby it won't be noticed."

[Illustration: "AS A PROCESSION WE WUZ MIDDLIN' LONG, BUT RUTHER THIN."]

"Yes, it will," sez he. "It will be noticed." And sez he, "I don't care about myself, but I am afraid it will reflect onto Wellington. I am afraid they will think it shows a lack of respect for him. For Wellington's sake I feel cut down about it."

And I sez, "I guess where Wellington is now, the color of a handkerchief border hain't a-goin' to make much difference to him either way."



And I don't spoze it wuz noticed much, for there wuzn't more'n ten or a dozen folks there when we went in. We went in in Injin file mostly by Cephas's request, so's to make more show. And as a procession we wuz middlin' long, but ruther thin.

The sermon wuz not so very good as to quality, but abundant as to quantity. It wuz, as nigh as I could calkerlate, about a hour and three-quarters long. Josiah whispered to me along about the last that "we had been there over seven hours, and his legs wuz paralyzed."

And I whispered back that "seven hours would take us into the night, and to stretch his feet out and pinch 'em," which he did.

But it wuz long and tegus. My feet got to sleep twice, and I had hard work to wake 'em up agin. The sermon meant to be about Wellington, I s'pose; he did talk a sight about him, and then he kinder branched off onto politics, and then the Inter-State bill; he kinder favored it, I thought.

Wall, we all got drippin' wet a-goin' home, for Cephas insisted on our gettin' out at the grave, for he had hired some uncommon high singers (high every way, in price and in notes) to sing at the grave.

And so we disembarked in the drippin' rain, on the wet grass, and formed a procession agin. And Cephas had a long exercise light there in the rain. But the singin' wuz kinder jerky and curius, and they had got their pay beforehand, so they hurried it through. And one man, the tenor, who wuz dretful afraid of takin' cold, hurried through his part and got through first, and started on a run for the carriage. The others stood their grounds till the piece wuz finished, but they put on some dretful curius quavers. I believe they had had chills; it sounded like it.

Take it altogether, I don't believe anybody got much satisfaction out of it, only Cephas. S. Annie sp'ilt her dress and bonnet entirely--they wuz wilted all down; and she ordered another suit jest like it before she slept. Wall, the next mornin' early two men come with plans for monuments. Cephas had telegrafted to 'em to come with plans and bid for the job of furnishin' the monument.

And after a good deal of talk on both sides, Cephas and S. Annie selected one that wuz very high and p'inted.

The men stayed to dinner, and I said to Cephas out to one side--

"Cephas, that monument is a-goin' to cost a sight."

"Wall," sez he, "we can't raise too high a one. Wellington deserved it all."

Sez I, "Won't that and all these funeral expenses take about all the money he left?"

"Oh, no!" sez he. "He had insured his life for a large amount, and it all goes to his wife and children. He deserves a monument if a man ever did."

"But," sez I, "don't you believe that Wellington would ruther have S. Annie and the children settled down in a good little home with sumthin'

left to take care of 'em, than to have all this money spent in perfectly useless things?"

"\_Useless!\_" sez Cephas, turnin' red. "Why," sez he, "if you wuzn't a near relation I should resent that speech bitterly."

"Wall," sez I, "what do all these flowers, and empty carriages, and silver-plated nails, and crape, and so forth--what does it all amount to?"

"Respect and honor to his memory," sez Cephas, proudly.

Sez I, "Such a life as Wellington's had them; no body could take 'em away nor deminish 'em. Such a brave, honest life is crowned with honor and respect any way. It don't need no crape, nor flowers, nor monuments to win 'em. And, at the same time," sez I dreamily, "if a man is mean, no amount of crape, or flower-pieces, or flowery sermons, or obituries, is a-goin' to cover up that meanness. A life has to be lived out-doors as it were; it can't be hid. A string of mournin' carriages, no matter how long, hain't a-goin' to carry a dishonorable life into honor, and no grave, no matter how low and humble it is, is a-goin' to cover up a honorable life.

"Such a life as Wellington's don't need no monument to carry up the story of his virtues into the heavens; it is known there already. And them that mourn his loss don't need cold marble words to recall his goodness and faithfulness. The heart where the shadow of his eternal absence has fell don't need crape to make it darker.

"Wellington wouldn't be forgot if S. Annie wore pure white from day today. No, nobody that knew Wellington, from all I have hearn of him, needs crape to remind 'em that he wuz once here and now is gone.

"Howsomever, as fur as that is concerned, I always feel that mourners must do as they are a mind to about crape, with fear and tremblin'--that is, if they are well off, and \_can\_ do as they are a mind to; and the same with monuments, flowers, empty coaches, etc. But in this case, Cephas Bodley, I wouldn't be a doin' my duty if I didn't speak my mind. When I look at these little helpless souls that are left in a cold world with nothin' to stand between them and want but the small means their pa worked so hard for and left for the express purpose of takin' care of 'em, it seems to me a foolish thing, and a cruel thing, to spend all that money on what is entirely onnecessary."

"Onnecessary!" sez Cephas, angrily. "Agin I say, Josiah Allen's wife, that if it wuzn't for our close relationship I should turn on you. A worm will turn," sez he, "if it is too hardly trampled on."

"I hain't trampled on you," sez I, "nor hain't had no idea on't. I wuz only statin' the solemn facts and truth of the matter. And you will see it some time, Cephas Bodley, if you don't now."

Sez Cephas, "The worm has turned, Josiah Allen's wife! Yes, I feel that I have got to look now to more distant relations for comfort. Yes, the worm has been stomped on too heavy."

He looked cold, cold as a iceickle almost. And I see that jest the few words I had spoke, jest the slight hints I had gin, hadn't been took as they should have been took. So I said no more. For agin the remark of

that little bad boy came up in my mind and restrained me from sayin' any more.

Truly, as the young male child observed, "it wuzn't my funeral."

We went home almost immediatly afterwards, my heart nearly a-bleedin' for the little children, poor little creeters, and Cephas actin' cold and distant to the last And we hain't seen 'em sence. But news has come from them, and come straight. Josiah heerd to Jonesville all about it. And though it is hitchin' the democrat buggy on front of the mare--to tell the end of the funeral here--yet I may as well tell it now and be done with it.

The miller at Loontown wuz down to the Jonesville mill to get the loan of some bags, and Josiah happened to be there to mill that day, and heerd all about it.

Cephas had got the monument, and the ornaments on it cost fur more than he expected. There wuz a wreath a-runnin' round it clear from the bottom to the top, and verses a kinder runnin' up it at the same time. And it cost fearful. Poetry a-runnin' up, they say, costs fur more than it duz on a level.

Any way, the two thousand dollars that wuz insured on Wellington's life wuzn't quite enough to pay for it. But the sale of his law library and the best of the housen' stuff paid it. The nine hundred he left went, every mite of it, to pay the funeral expenses and mournin' for the family.

[Illustration: CARRIED TO THE COUNTY POOR HOUSE.]

And as bad luck always follers on in a procession, them mortgages of Cephas'ses all run out sort o' together. His creditors sold him out, and when his property wuz all disposed of it left him over fourteen hundred dollars in debt.

The creditors acted perfectly greedy, so they say--took everything they could; and one of the meanest ones took that insane bedquilt that I finished. That \_wuz\_ mean. They say Sally Ann crumpled right down when that wuz took. Some say that they got hold of that tall weed of Cephas'ses, and some dispute it; some say that he wore it on the last ride he took in Loontown.

But, howsomever, Cephas wuz took sick, Sally Ann wuzn't able to do anything for their support, S. Annie wuz took down with the typhus, and so it happened the very day the monument wuz brought to the Loontown cemetery, Cephas Bodley's folks wuz carried to the county house, S. Annie, the children and all.

And it happened dretful curius, but the town hired that very team that drawed the monument there, to take the family back.

It wuz a good team.

The monument wuzn't set up, for they lacked money to pay for the underpinnin'! (Wuz n't it curius, Cephas Bodley never would think of the underpinnin' to anything?) But it lay there by the side of the road, a great white shape.

And they say the children wuz skairt, and cried when they went by it--cried and wept.

But I believe it wuz because they wuz cold and hungry that made 'em cry. I don't believe it wuz the monument.

## CHAPTER XI.

[Illustration:]

A few days follerin' on and ensuin' after this eppisode, Submit Tewksburv wuz a takin' supper with me. She had come home with me from the meetin' house where we had been to work all day.

I had urged her to stay, for she lived a mile further on the road, and had got to walk home afoot.

And she hain't any too well off, Submit hain't--she has to work hard for every mite of food she eats, and clothes she wears, and fuel and lights, etc., etc.

So I keep her to dinners and suppers all I can, specially when we are engaged in meetin' house work, for as poor as Submit is, she will insist on doin' for the meetin' house jest as much as any other female woman in Jonesville.

She is quite small boneded, and middlin' good lookin' for a women of her years. She has got big dark eyes, very soft and mellow lookin' in expression--and a look deep down into 'em, as if she had been waitin' for something, for some time. Her hair is gettin' quite gray now, but its original color was auburn, and she has got quite a lot of it--kinder crinkly round her forehead. Her complexion is pale. She is a very good lookin' woman yet, might marry any day of the week now, I hain't no doubt of it. She is a single woman, but is well thought on in Jonesville, and the southern part of Zoar, where she has relatives on her mother's side.

[Illustration: SUBMIT TEWKSBURY.]

She has had chances to my certain knowledge (widowers and such).

But if all the men in the world should come and stand in rows in front of her gate with gilded crowns in their hands all ready to crown her, and septers all ready for her to grasp holt of, and wield over the world, she would refuse every one of 'em.

She has had a disappointment, Submit has. And she looked at the world so long through tears, that the world got to lookin' sort o' dim like and shadowy to her, and the whole men race looked to her fur off and misty, as folks will when you look at 'em through a rain.

She couldn't marry one of them shadows of men, if she tried, and she hain't never tried. No, her heart always has been, and is now, fur away, a-travellin' through unknown regions, unknown, and yet more real to her than Jonesville or Zoar, a-follerin' the one man in the world who is a

reality to her. Submit wuz engaged to a young Methodist minister by the name of Samuel Danker. I remember him well. A good lookin' young fellow at the time, with blue eyes and light hair, ruther long and curly, and kinder wavin' back from his forward, and a deep spiritual look in his eyes. In fact, his eyes looked right through the fashions and follies of the civilized world, into the depths of ignorance, rivers of ruin and despair, that wuz a-washin' over a human race, black jungles where naked sin and natural depravities crouched hungry for victims.

Samuel Danker felt that he had got to go into heathen lands as a missionary. He wuz engaged to Submit, and loved her dearly, and he urged her to go too.

But Submit had a invalid father on her hands, a bed rid grandfather, and three young brothers, too young to earn a thing, and they all on 'em together hadn't a cent of money to their names. They had twenty-five acres of middlin' poor land, and a old house.

Wall, Submit felt that she couldn't leave these helpless ones and go to more foreign heathen lands. So, with a achin' heart, she let Samuel Danker go from her, for he felt a call, loud, and she couldn't counsel him to shet up his ears, or put cotton into 'em. Submit Tewksbury had always loved and worked for the Methodist meetin' house (she jined it on probation when she wuz thirteen). But although she always had been extremely liberal in givin', and had made a practice of contributin' every cent she could spare to the meetin' house, it wuz spozed that Samuel Danker wuz the biggest offerin' she had ever give to it.

Fur it wuz known that he went to her the night before he sot sail, took supper with her, and told her she should decide the matter for him, whether he went or whether he staid.

It wuz spozed his love for Submit wuz so great that it made him waver when the time come that he must leave her to her lot of toil and sacrifice and loneliness.

But Submit loved the Methodist meetin' house to that extent, she leaned so hard on the arm of Duty, that she nerved up her courage anew, refused to accept the sacrifice of his renunciation, bid him go to his great work, and quit himself like a man--told him she would always love him, pray for him, be constant to him. And she felt that the Master they both wanted to serve would some day bring him back to her.

So he sailed away to his heathens--and Submit stayed to home with her five helpless males and her achin' heart. And if I had to tell which made her the most trouble, I couldn't to save my life.

She knew the secret of her achin' heart, and the long dark nights she kep awake with it. The neighbors couldn't understand that exactly, for there hain't no language been discovered yet that will give voice to the silent crys of a breakin' heart, a tender heart, a constant heart, cryin' out acrost the grayness of dreary days acrost the blackness of lonely nights.

But we could see her troubles with the peevish paralasys of age, with the tremendous follies of undisciplined youth.

But Submit took care of the hull caboodle of 'em; worked out some by days' works, to get more necessaries for 'em than the poor little

farm would bring in; nursed the sick on their sick-beds and on their death-beds, till she see 'em into Heaven--or that is where we spoze they went to, bein' deservin' old males both on 'em, her father and her grandfather, and in full connectin with the Methodist Episcopel meetin' house.

She took care of her young brothers, patient with 'em always, ready to mend bad rents in their clothin' and their behavior--tryin' to prop up their habits and their morals, givin' 'em all the schoolin' she could, givin' 'em all a good trade, all but the youngest, him she kep with her always till the Lord took him (scarlet fever), took him to learn the mysterius trade of the immortals.

Submit had a hard fit of sickness after that. And when she got up agin, there wuz round her pale forward a good many white hairs that wuz orburn before the little boy went away from her.

Sense that, the other boys have married, and Submit has lived alone in the old farm-house, lettin' the farm out on shares. It is all run down; she don't get much from it; it don't yield much but trouble and burdocks, but as little as she gets, she always will, as I say, do her full share, and more than her share, for the meetin' house.

[Illustration: "HE TOOK SUPPER WITH HER FOR THE LAST TIME."]

Some think it is on account of her inherient goodness, and some think it is on account of Samuel Danker.

We all spose she hain't forgot Samuel. And they do say that every year when the day comes round, that he took supper with her for the last time, she puts a plate on for him--the very one he eat on last--a pink edged chiny plate, with gilt sprigs, the last one left of her mother's first set of chiny.

That is what they \_say\_, I hain't never seen the plate.

It is now about twenty years sense Samuel Danker went to heathen lands. And as it wuz a man-eatin' tribe he went to preach to, and as he hain't been heern of from that day to this, it is spozed that they eat him up some years ago.

But it is thought that Submit hain't gin up hope yet. We spoze so, but don't know, on account of her never sayin' anything on the subject. But we judge from the plate.

Wall, as I say (and I have episoded fearfully, fearfully), Submit took supper with me that night. And after Josiah had put out his horse (he had been to Jonesville for the evenin' mail, and stopped for us at the meetin' house on his way back), he took the \_World\_ out of his pocket, and perused it for some time, and from that learned the great news that wimmen wuz jest about to be held up agin, to see if her strength wuz sufficient to set on the Conference.

And oh! how Josiah Allen went on about it to Submit and me, all the while we wuz a eatin' supper--and for more'n a hour afterwuds.

## CHAPTER XII.

Submit wuz very skairt to heern him go on (she felt more nervous on account of an extra hard day's work), and I myself wuz beat out, but I wuzn't afraid at all of him, though he did go on elegant, and dretful empresseive and even skairful.

He stood up on the same old ground that men have always stood up on, the ground of man's great strength and capability, and wimmen's utter weakness, helplessness, and incapacity. Josiah enlarged almost wildly on the subject of how high, how inaccessiblely lofty the Conference wuz, and the utter impossibility of a weak, helpless, fragaile bein' like a women ever gettin' up on it, much less settin' on it. And then, oh how vividly he depicted it, how he and every other male Methodist in the land loved wimmen too well, worshipped 'em too deeply to put such a wearin' job onto 'em. Oh how Josiah Allen soared up in eloquence. Submit shed tears, or, that is, I thought she did--I see her wipe her eyes any way. Some think that about the time the Samuel Danker anniversary comes round, she is more nervous and deprested. It wuz very near now, and take that with her hard work that day, it accounts some for her extra depression--though, without any doubt, it wuz Josiah's talk that started the tears.

I couldn't bear to see Submit look so mournful and deprested, and so, though I wuz that tired myself that I could hardly hold my head up, yet I did take my bits in my teeth, as you may say, and asked him--

What the awful hard job wuz that he and other men wuz so anxus to ward offen wimmen.

And he sez, "Why, a settin' on the Conference."

And I sez, "I don't believe that is such a awful hard job to tackle."

"Yes, indeed, it is," sez Josiah in his most skairful axent, "yes, it is."

And he shook his head meenin'ly and impressively, and looked at me and Submit in as mysterius and strange a way, es I have ever been looked at in my life, and I have had dretful curius looks cast onto me, from first to last. And he sez in them deep impressive axents of hisen,

"You jest try it once, and see--I have sot on it, and I know."

Josiah wuz sent once as a delegate to the Methodist Conference, so I spozed he did know.

But I sez, "Why you come home the second day when you sot as happy as a king, and you told me how you had rested off durin' the two days, and how you had visited round at Uncle Jenkins'es, and Cousin Henn's, and you said that you never had had such a good time in your hull life, as you did when you wuz a settin'. You looked as happy as a king, and acted so."

Josiah looked dumbfounded for most a quarter of a minute. For he knew my words wuz as true es anything ever sot down in Matthew, Mark, or Luke, or any of the other old patriarks. He knew it wuz Gospel truth, that he had boasted of his good times a settin', and as I say for nearly a

quarter of a minute he showed plain signs of mortification.

But almost imegietly he recovered himself, and went on with the doggy obstinacy of his sect: "Oh, wall! Men can tackle hard jobs, and get some enjoyment out of it too, when it is in the line of duty. One thing that boys em' up, and makes em' happy, is the thought that they are a keepin' trouble and care offen wimmen. That is a sweet thought to men, and always wuz. And there wuz great strains put onto our minds, us men that sot, that wimmen couldn't be expected to grapple with, and hadn't ort to try to. It wuz a great strain onto us."

"What was the nater of the strain?" sez I. "I didn't know as you did a thing only sot still there and go to sleep. \_You\_ wuz fast asleep there most the hull of the time, for it come straight to me from them that know. And all that Deacon Bobbet did who went with you wuz to hold up his hand two or three times a votin'. I shouldn't think that wuz so awful wearin'."

And agin I sez, "What wuz the strain?"

But Josiah didn't answer, for that very minute he remembered a pressin' engagement he had about borrowin' a plow. He said he had got to go up to Joe Charnick's to get his plow. (I don't believe he wanted a plow that time of night.) But he hurried away from the spot. And soon after Submit went home lookin' more deprested and down-casted than ever.

And Josiah Allen didn't get home till \_late\_ at night. I dare persume to say it wuz as late as a quarter to nine when that man got back to the bosom of his family.

And I sot there all alone, and a-meditatin' on things, and a-wonderin' what under the sun he wuz a-traipsin up to Joe Charnick's for at that time of night, and a-worryin' some for fear he wuz a-keepin' Miss Charnick up, and a-spozin' in my mind what Miss Charnick would do, to get along with the meetin' house, and the Conference question, if she wuz a member. (She is a \_very\_ sensible woman, Jenette Charnick is, \_very\_, and a great favorite with me, and others.)

And I got to thinkin' how prosperous and happy she is now, and how much she had went through. And I declare the hull thing come back to me, all the strange and curius circumstances connected with her courtship and marriage, and I thought it all out agin, the hull story, from beginnin' to end.

The way it begun wuz--and the way Josiah Allen and me come to have any connectin with the story wuz as follers:

Some time ago, and previus, we had a widder come to stay with us a spell, she that wuz Tamer Shelmadine, Miss Trueman Pool that now is.

Her husband died several years ago, and left her not over and above well off. And so she goes round a-visitin', and has went ever sense his death. And finds sights of faults with things wherever she is, sights of it.

Trueman wuz Josiah's cousin, on his own side, and I always made a practice of usin' her quite well. She used to live neighbor to me before I wuz married, and she come and stayed nine weeks.



She is a tall spindlin' woman, a Second Adventist by perswasion, and weighs about ninety-nine pounds.

Wall, as I say, she means middlin' well, and would be quite agreeable if it wuzn't for a habit she has of thinkin' what she duz is a leetle better than anybody else can do, and wantin' to tell a leetle better story than anybody else can.

Now she thinks she looks better than I do. But Josiah sez she can't begin with me for looks, and I don't spoze she can, though of course it hain't to be expected that I would want it told of that I said so. No, I wouldn't want it told of pro or con, especially con. But I know Josiah Allen has always been called a pretty good judge of wimmen's looks.

[Illustration: "SHE IS A TALL SPINDLIN' WOMAN."]

And now she thinks she can set hens better than I can--and make better riz biscuit. She jest the same as told me so. Any way, the first time I baked bread after she got here, she looked down on my loaves real haughty, yet with a pityin' look, and sez:

"It is very good for yeast, but I always use milk emptin's."

And she kinder tested her head, and sort o' swept out of the room, not with a broom, no, she would scorn to sweep out a room with a broom or help me in any way, but she sort o' swept it out with her mean. But I didn't care, I knew my bread wuz good.

Now if anybody is sick, she will always tell of times when she has been sicker. She boasts of layin' three nights and two days in a fit. But we don't believe it, Josiah and me don't. That is, we don't believe she lay there so long, a-runnin'.

We believe she come out of 'em occasionally.

But you couldn't get her to give off a hour or a minute of the time. Three nights and two days she lay there a-runnin', so she sez, and she has said it so long, that we spoze, Josiah and me do, that she believes it herself now.

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SAMANTHA

AMONG THE BRETHREN.

By

"Josiah Allen's Wife"

(Marietta Holley)

Part 3

CHAPTER VII.

But along about the middle of the fifth week I see a change. Lodema had been uncommon exasperatin', and I expected she would set Josiah to goin', and I groaned in spirit, to think what a job wuz ahead of me, to part their two tongues--when all of a sudden I see a curius change come over my pardner's face.

I remember jest the date that the change in his mean wuz visible, and made known to me--for it wuz the very mornin' that we got the invitation to old Mr. and Miss Pressley's silver weddin'. And that wuz the fifteenth day of the month along about the middle of the forenoon.



And it wuz not half an hour after Elnathen Pressley came to the door and give us the invitations, that I see the change in his mean.

And when I asked him about it afterwards, what that strange and curius look meant, he never hung back a mite from tellin' me, but sez right out plain:

"Mebby, Samantha, I hain't done exactly as I ort to by cousin Lodema, and I have made up my mind to make her a happy surprise before she goes away."

"Wall," sez I, "so do."

I thought he wuz goin' to get her a new dress. She had been a-hintin' to him dretful strong to that effect. She wanted a parmetty, or a balzereen, or a circassien, which wuz in voge in her young days. But I wuz in hopes he would get her a cashmere, and told him so, plain.

But I couldn't get him to tell what the surprise wuz. He only sez, sez he:

"I am goin' to make her a happy surprise."

And the thought that he wuz a-goin' to branch out and make a change, wuz considerable of a comfort to me. And I needed comfort--yes, indeed I did--I needed it bad. For not one single thing did I do for her that I done right, though I tried my best to do well by her.

But she found fault with my vittles from mornin' till night, though I am called a excellent cook all over Jonesville, and all round the adjoining country, out as far as Loontown, and Zoar. It has come straight back to me by them that wouldn't lie. But it hain't made me vain.

But I never cooked a thing that suited Lodema, not a single thing. Most of my vittles wuz too fresh, and then if I braced up and salted 'em extra so as to be sure to please her, why then they wuz briny, and hurt her mouth.

Why, if you'll believe it, I give her a shawl, made her a present of it; it had even checks black and white, jest as many threads in the black stripes as there wuz in the white, for I counted 'em.

And she told me, after she had looked it all over and said it wuz kinder thin and slazy, and checkered shawls had gone out of fashion, and the black looked some as if it would fade with washin', and the white wuzn't over clear, and the colors wuzn't no ways becomin' to her complexion, and etcetery, etcetery.

"But," sez she, after she had got all through with the rest of her complaints--"if the white stripes wuz where the black wuz, and the black where the white wuz, she should like it quite well." And there it wuz, even check, two and two. Wall, that wuz a sample of her doin's. If anybody had a Roman nose she wanted a Greecy one.

[Illustration: "IF THE WHITE STRIPES WUZ WHERE THE BLACK WUZ."]

And if the nose wuz Greece, why then she wanted Rome.

Why, Josiah sez to me along about the third week, he said (to ourselves, in private), "that if Lodema went to Heaven she would be dissatisfied with it, and think it wuz livelier, and more goin' on down to the other place." And he said she would get the angels all stirred up a findin' fault with their feathers.

I told him "I would not hear such talk."

"Wall," sez he, "don't you believe it?"

And I kinder turned him off, and wouldn't tell, and told him it wuz wicked to talk so.

"Wall," sez Josiah, "you dassent say she wouldn't."

And I dassent, though I wouldn't own it up to him, I dassent.

And if she kinder got out of other occupations for a minute durin' them first weeks she would be a quarrelin' with Josiah Allen about age.

I s'pose she and Josiah wuzn't far from the same age, for they wuz children together. But she wanted to make out she wuz young.

And she would tell Josiah that "he seemed jest like a father to her, and always had." And sometimes when she felt the most curius, she would call him "Father," and "Pa," and "Papa." And it would mad Josiah Allen so that I would have all I could do to quell him down.

Now I didn't feel so, I didn't mind it so much. Why, there would be days, when she felt the curiusest, that she would call me "Mother," and "Ma," and foller me round with foot-stools and things, when I went to set down, and would kinder worry over my fallin' off the back step, and would offer to help me up the suller stairs, and so forth, and watchin' over what I et, and tellin' me folks of my age ort to be careful, and not over-eat.

And Josiah asked me to ask her "How she felt about that time?" For she wuz from three to four years older than I wuz.

But I wouldn't contend with her, and the footstools come kinder handy, I had jest as lieve have 'em under my feet as not, and ruther. And as for rich vittles not agreein' with me, and my not over-eatin', I broke that tip by fallin' right in with her, and not cookin' such good things--that quelled her down, and gaulded Josiah too.

But, as I said, it riled Josiah the worst of anything to have Lodema call him father, for he wants to make out that he is kinder young himself.

And sez he to her one day, about the third week, when she was a-goin' on about how good and fatherly he looked, and how much he seemed like a parent to her, and always had, sez he: "I wonder if I seemed like a father to you when we wuz a-kickin' at each other in the same cradle?" Sez he: "We both used to nuss out of the same bottle, any way, for I have heard my mother say so lots of times. There wuzn't ten days' difference in our ages. You wuz ten days the oldest as I have always made out."

She screamed right out, "Why, Josiah Allen, where is your conscience to

talk in that way--and your heart?"

"In here, where everybody's is," sez Josiah, strikin' himself with his right hand--he meant to strike against his left breast, but struck too low, kinder on his stomach.

And sez I, "That is what I have always thought, Josiah Allen. I have always had better luck reachin' your conscience through your stomach than in any other way. And now," sez I coldly, "do you go out and bring in a pail of water."

I used to get beat out and sick of their scufflin's and disagreein's, and broke 'em up whenever I could.

But oh! oh! how she did quarrel with Josiah Allen and that buzz saw scheme of his'n. How light she made of that enterprise, how she demeaned the buzz, and run the saws--till I felt that bad as I hated the enterprise myself, I felt that a variety of loud buzz saws would be a welcome relief from her tongue--from their two tongues; for as fur down as she would run them buzz saws, jest so fur would Josiah Allen praise 'em up.

[Illustration: LODEMA AND JOSIAH IN YOUTH.]

She never agreed with Josiah Allen but in jest one thing while she was under his ruff. I happened to mention one day how extremely anxious I wuz to have females set on the Conference; and then, wantin' to dispute me, and also bein' set on that side, she run down the project, and called it all to nort--and when too late she see that she had got over on Josiah Allen's side of the fence.

But it had one good effect. When that man see she wuz there, he waded off, way out of sight of the project, and wouldn't mention it--it madded him so to be on the same side of the fence she wuz--so that it seemed to happen all for the best.

Why, I took her as a dispensation from the first, and drawed all sorts of morels from her, and sights of 'em--sights.

But oh, it wuz tuff on me, fearful tuff.

And when she calculated and laid out to make out her visit and go, wuz more than we could tell.

## CHAPTER VIII.

For two weeks had passed away like a nite mair of the nite--and three weeks, and four weeks--and she didn't seem to be no nigher goin' than she did when she came.

And I would not make a move towards gettin' rid of her, not if I had dropped down in my tracts, because she wuz one of the relatives on his side.

But I wuz completely fagged out; it did seem, as I told Tirzah Ann one

day in confidence, "that I never knew the meanin' of the word 'fag' before."

And Tirzah Ann told me (she couldn't bear her) that if she wuz in my place, she would start her off. Sez she:

"She has plenty of brothers and sisters, and a home of her own, and why should she come here to torment you and father;" and sez she, "I'll talk to her, mother, I'd jest as leve as not." Sez I, "Tirzah Ann, if you say a word to her, I'll--I'll never put confidence in you agin;" sez I, "Life is full of tribulations, and we must expect to bear our crosses;" sez I, "The old martyrs went through more than Lodema."

Sez Tirzah Ann, "I believe Lodema would have wore out John Rogers."

And I don't know but she would, but I didn't encourage her by ownin' it up that she would; but I declare for't, I believe she would have been more tegus than the nine children, and the one at the breast, any way.

Wall, as I said, it wuz durin' the fifth week that Josiah Allen turned right round, and used her first rate.

And when she would talk before folks about how much filial affection she had for him, and about his always havin' been jest like a parent to her, and everything of the kind--he never talked back a mite, but looked clever, and told me in confidence, "That he had turned over a new leaf, and he wuz goin' to surprise her--give her a happy surprise."

And he seemed, instead of lovin' to rile her up, as he had, to jest put his hull mind on the idee of the joyful surprise.

Wall, I am always afraid (with reason) of Josiah Allen's enterprizes. But do all I could, he wouldn't tell me one word about what he wuz goin' to do, only he kep it up, kep a-sayin' that,

"It wuz somethin' I couldn't help approvin' of, and it wuz somethin' that would happify me, and be a solid comfort to her, and a great gain and honor."

So (though I trembled some for the result) I had to let it go on, for she wuz one of the relations on his own side, and I knew it wouldn't do for me to interfere too much, and meddle.

Why, he did come right out one day and give hints to me to that effect.

Sez I, "Why do you go on and be so secret about it? Why don't you tell your companion all about it, what you are a-goin' to do, and advise with her?"

And he sez, "I guess I know what I am about. She is one of the relations on my side, and I guess I have got a few rights left, and a little spunk."

"Yes," sez I, sadly, "you have got the spunk."

"Wall," sez he, "I guess I can spunk up, and do somethin' for one of my own relations, without any interference or any advice from any of the Smith family, or anybody else."

Sez I, "I don't want to stop your doin' all you can for Lodema, but why not tell what you are a-goin' to do?"

"It will be time enough when the time comes," sez he. "You will find it out in the course of next week."

Wall, it run along to the middle of the next week. And one day I had jest sot down to tie off a comforter.

It wuz unbleached cheese cloth that I had bought and colored with tea leaves. It wuz a sort of a light mice color, a pretty soft gray, and I wuz goin' to tie it in with little balls of red zephyr woosted, and work it in buttonhole stitch round the edge with the same.

It wuz fur our bed, Josiah's and mine, and it wuz goin' to be soft and warm and very pretty, though I say it, that shouldn't.

[Illustration: "I HAD JEST SOT DOWN TO TIE OFF A COMFORTER."]

It wuzn't quite so pretty as them that hain't colored. I had 'em for my spare beds, cream color tied with pale blue and pink, that wuz perfectly beautiful and very dressy; but I thought for everyday use a colored one would be better.

Wall, I had brought it out and wuz jest a-goin' to put it onto the frames (some new-fashioned ones I had borrowed from Tirzah Ann for the occasion).

And Cousin Lodema had jest observed, "that the new-fashioned frames with legs wuzn't good for nothin', and she didn't like the color of gray, it looked too melancholy, and would be apt to depress our feelin's too much, and would be tryin' to our complexions."

And I told her "that I didn't spoze there would be a very great congregation in our bedroom, as a general thing in the dead of night, to see whether it wuz becomin' to Josiah and me or not. And, it bein' as dark as Egypt, our complexions wouldn't make a very bad show any way."

"Wall," she said, "to tie it with red wuzn't at all appropriate, it wuz too dressy a color for folks of our age, Josiah's and mine." "Why," sez she, "even I, at my age, would skurcely care to sleep under one so gay. And she wouldn't have a cheese cloth comforter any way." She sort o' stopped to ketch breath, and Josiah sez:

"Oh, wall, Lodema, a cheese cloth comforter is better than none, and I should think you would be jest the one to like any sort of a frame on legs."

But I wunk at him, a real severe and warnin' wink, and he stopped short off, for all the world as if he had forgot bein' on his good behavior; he stopped short off, and went right to behavin', and sez he to me:

"Don't put on your comforter to-day, Samantha, for Tirzah Ann and Whitfield and the babe are a-comin' over here bimeby, and Maggie is a-comin', and Thomas Jefferson."

"Wall," sez I, "that is a good reason why I should keep on with it; the girls can help me if I don't get it off before they get here."

And then he sez, "Miss Minkley is a-comin', too, and the Elder."

"Why'ee," sez I, "Josiah Allen, why didn't you tell me before, so I could have baked up somethin' nice? What a man you are to keep things; how long have you known it?"

"Oh, a week or so!"

"A week!" sez I; "Josiah Allen, where is your conscience? if you have got a conscience."

"In the same old place," sez he, kinder hittin' himself in the pit of his stomach.

"Wall, I should think as much," sez I.

And Lodema sez, sez she: "A man that won't tell things is of all creeters that walks the earth the most disagreeable. And I should think the girls, Maggie and Tirzah Ann, would want to stay to home and clean house such a day as this is. And I should think a Elder would want to stay to home so's to be on hand in case of anybody happenin' to be exercised in their minds, and wantin to talk to him on religious subjects. And if I wuz a Elder's wife, I should stay to home with him; I should think it wuz my duty and my privilege. And if I wuz a married woman, I would have enough baked up in the house all the time, so's not to be afraid of company."

But I didn't answer back. I jest sot away my frames, and went out and stirred up a cake; I had one kind by me, besides cookies and jell tarts.

But I felt real worked up to think I hadn't heard. Wall, I hadn't more'n got that cake fairly into the oven when the children come, and Elder Minkley and his wife. And I thought they looked queer, and I thought the Elder begun to tell me somethin', and I thought I see Josiah wink at him. But I wouldn't want to take my oath whether he wunk or not, but I thought he wunk.

I wuz jest a turnin' this over in my mind, and a carryin' away their things, when I glanced out of the settin' room winder, and lo, and behold! there wuz Abi Adsit a comin' up to the front door, and right behind her wuz her Pa and Ma Adsit, and Deacon Henzy and his wife, and Miss Henn and Metilda, and Lute Pitkins and his wife, and Miss Petengill, and Deacon Sypher and Drusilly, and Submit Tewksbury--a hull string of 'em as long as a procession.

Sez I, and I spoke it right out before I thought--sez I--

"Why'ee!" sez I. "For the land's sake!" sez I, "has there been a funeral, or anything? And are these the mourners?" sez I. "Are they stoppin' here to warm?"

For it wuz a cold day--and I repeated the words to myself mechanically as it wuz, as I see 'em file up the path.

"They be mourners, hain't they?"

"No," sez Josiah, who had come in and wuz a standin' by the side of me, as I spoke out to myself unbeknown to me--sez he in a proud axent--

"No, they hain't mourners, they are Happyfiers; they are Highlariers; they have come to our party. We are givin' a party, Samantha. We are havin' a diamond weddin' here for Lodema."

"A diamond weddin'!" I repeated mechanically.

"Yes, this is my happy surprise for Lodema."

I looked at Lodema Trumble. She looked strange. She had sunk back in her chair. I thought she wuz a-goin' to faint, and she told somebody the next day, "that she did almost lose her conscientiousness."

"Why," sez I, "she hain't married."

[Illustration: "WE ARE GIVIN' A PARTY, SAMANTHA."]

"Wall, she ort to be, if she hain't," sez he. "I say it is high time for her to have some sort of a weddin'. Everybody is a havin' 'em--tin, and silver and wooden, and basswood, and glass, and etc.--and I thought it wuz a perfect shame that Lodema shouldn't have none of no kind--and I thought I'd lay to, and surprise her with one. Every other man seemed to be a-holdin' off, not willin' seemin'ly that she should have one, and I jest thought I would happify her with one."

"Wall, why didn't you make her a silver one, or a tin?" sez I.

"Or a paper one!" screamed Lodema, who had riz up out of her almost faintin' condition. "That would have been much more appropriate," sez she.

"Wall, I thought a diamond one would be more profitable to her. For I asked 'em all to bring diamonds, if they brought anything. And then I thought it would be more suitable to her age."

"Why!" she screamed out. "They have to be married seventy-five years before they can have one."

"Yes," sez he dreemily, "I thought that would be about the right figure."

Lodema wuz too mad to find fault or complain or anything. She jest marched up-stairs and didn't come down agin that night. And the young folks had a splendid good time, and the old ones, too.

Tirzah Ann and Maggie had brought some refreshments with 'em, and so had some of the other wimmen, and, with what I had, there wuz enough, and more than enough, to refresh ourselves with.

Wall, the very next mornin' Lodema marched down like a grenideer, and ordered Josiah to take her to the train. And she eat breakfast with her things on, and went away immegiately after, and hain't been back here sense.

And I wuz truly glad to see her go, but wuz sorry she went in such a way, and I tell Josiah he wuz to blame,

But he acts as innocent as you please. And he goes all over the arguments agin every time I take him to do about it. He sez "she wuz old enough to have a weddin' of some kind."

And of course I can't dispute that, when he faces me right down, and sez:

"Hain't she old enough?"

And I'll say, kinder short--

"Why, I spoze so!"

"Wall," sez he, "wouldn't it have been profitable to her if they had brought diamonds? Wouldn't it have been both surprisin' and profitable?" And sez he, "I told 'em expressly to bring diamonds if they had more than they wanted. I charged old Bobbet and Lute Pitkins specially on the subject. I didn't want 'em to scrimp themselves; but," sez I, "if you have got more diamonds than you want, Lute, bring over a few to Lodema."

[Illustration: "IF YOU HAVE GOT MORE DIAMONDS THAN YOU WANT."]

"Yes," sez I, coldly, "he wuz dretful likely to have diamonds more than he wanted, workin' out by day's work to support his family. You know there wuzn't a soul you invited that owned a diamond."

"How did I know what they owned? I never have prowled round into their bureau draws and things, tryin' to find out what they had; they might have had quarts of 'em, and I not know it."

Sez I, "You did it to make fun of Lodema and get rid of her. And it only makes it worse to try to smooth it over." Sez I, "I'd be honorable about it if I wuz in your place, and own up."

"Own up? What have I got to own up? I shall always say if my orders wuz carried out, it would have been a profitable affair for Lodema, and it would--profitable and surprisin'."

And that is all I can get him to say about it, from that day to this.

## CHAPTER IX.

But truly the labors that descended onto my shoulders immedgiately after Lodema's departure wuz hard enough to fill up my hull mind, and tax every one of my energies.

Yes, my labors and the labors of the other female Jonesvillians wuz deep and arjuous in the extreme (of which more and anon bimeby).

I had been the female appinted in a private and becomin' female way, to go to Loontown to see the meetin' house there that we heard they had fixed over in a cheap but commojous way. And for reasons (of which more and anon) we wanted to inquire into the expense, the looks on't, etc., etc.

So I persuaded Josiah Allen to take me over to Loontown on this pressin' business, and he gin his consent to go on the condition that we should stop for a visit to Cephas Bodley'ses. Josiah sets store by 'em. You



see they are relations of ourn and have been for some time, entirely unbeknown to us, and they'd come more'n a year ago a huntin' of us up. They said they "thought relations ought to be hunted up and hanged together." They said "the idea of huntin' us up had come to 'em after readin' my books." They told me so, and I said, "Wall!" I didn't add nor diminish to that one "wall," for I didn't want to act too backward, nor too forward. I jest kep' kinder neutral, and said, "Wall!"

You see Cephas'ses father's sister-in-law wuz stepmother to my aunt's second cousin on my father's side. And Cephas said that "he had felt more and more, as years went by, that it wuz a burnin' shame for relations to not know and love each other." He said "he felt that he loved Josiah and me dearly."

I didn't say right out whether it wuz reciprokated or not I kinder said, "Wall!" agin.

And I told Josiah, in perfect confidence and the wood-house chamber, "that I had seen nearer relations than Mr. Bodley'ses folks wuz to us,"

[Illustration: "CEPHAS SAID IT WUZ A BURNIN' SHAME FOR RELATIONS TO NOT KNOW AND LOVE EACH OTHER."]

Howsumever, I done well by 'em. Josiah killed a fat turkey, and I baked it, and done other things for their comfort, and we had quite a good time. Cephas wuz ruther flowery and enthusiastick, and his mouth and voice wuz ruther large, but he meant well, I should judge, and we had quite a good time.

She wuz very freckled, and a second-day Baptist by perswasion, and wuz piecin' up a crazy bedquilt. She went a-visitin' a good deal, and got pieces of the women's dresses where she visited for blocks. So it wuz quite a savin' bedquilt, and very good-lookin', considerin'.

But to resoom and continue on. Cephas'ses folks made us promise on our two sacred honors, Josiah's honor and mine, that we would pay back the visit, for, as Cephas said, "for relatives to live so clost to each other, and not to visit back and forth, wuz a burnin' shame and a disgrace." And Josiah promised that we would go right away after sugerin'.

We wouldn't promise on the New Testament, as Cephas wanted us to (he is dretful enthusiastick); but we gin good plain promises that we would go, and laid out to keep our two words.

Wall, we got there onexpected, as they had come onto us. And we found 'em plunged into trouble. Their only child, a girl, who had married a young lawyer of Loontown, had jest lost her husband with the typus, and they wuz a-makin' preparations for the funeral when we got there. She and her husband had come on a visit, and he wuz took down bed-sick there and died.

I told 'em I felt like death to think I had descended down onto 'em at such a time.

But Cephas said he wuz jest dispatchin' a messenger for us when we arrove, for, he said, "in a time of trouble, then wuz the time, if ever, that a man wanted his near relations clost to him."

And he said "we had took a load offen him by appearin' jest as we did, for there would have been some delay in gettin' us there, if the messenger had been dispatched."

He said "that mornin' he had felt so bad that he wanted to die--it seemed as if there wuzn't nothin' left for him to live for; but now he felt that he had sunthin' to live for, now his relatives wuz gathered round him."

Josiah shed tears to hear Cephas go on. I myself didn't weep none, but I wuz glad if we could be any comfort to 'em, and told 'em so.

And I told Sally Ann, that wuz Cephas's wife, that I would do anything I could to help 'em. And she said everything wuz a-bein' done that wuz necessary. She didn't know of but one thing that wuz likely to be overlooked and neglected, and that wuz the crazy bedquilt. She said "she would love to have that finished to throw over a lounge in the settin'-room, that wuz frayed out on the edges, and if I felt like it, it would be a great relief to her to have me take it right offen her hands and finish it."

So I took out my thimble and needle (I always carry such necessaries with me, in a huzzy made expressly for that purpose), and I sot down and went to piecin' up. There wuz seventeen blocks to piece up, each one crazy as a loon to look at, and it wuz all to set together.

She had the pieces, for she had been off on a visitin' tower the week before, and collected of 'em.

So I sot in quiet and the big chair in the settin'-room, and pieced up, and see the preparations goin' on round us.

I found that Cephas's folks lived in a house big and showy-lookin', but not so solid and firm as I had seen.

It wuz one of the houses, outside and inside, where more pains had been took with the porticos and ornaments than with the underpinnin'.

It had a showy and kind of a shaky look. And I found that that extended to Cephas's business arrangements. Amongst the other ornaments of his buildin's wuz mortgages, quite a lot of'em, and of almost every variety. He had gin his only child, S. Annie (she wuz named after her mother, Sally Ann, but spelt it this way), he had gin S. Annie a showy education, a showy weddin', and a showy settin'-out. But she had had the good luck to marry a sensible man, though poor.

[Illustration: "So I SOT IN QUIET AND THE BIG CHAIR."]

He took S. Annie and the brackets, the piano and hangin' lamps and baskets and crystal bead lambrequins, her father had gin her, moved 'em all into a good, sensible, small house, and went to work to get a practice and a livin'. He was a lawyer by perswasion.

Wall, he worked hard, day and night, for three little children come to 'em pretty fast, and S. Annie consumed a good deal in trimmin's and cheap lace to ornament 'em; she wuz her father's own girl for ornament. But he worked so hard, and had so many irons in the fire, and kep' 'em all so hot, that he got a good livin' for 'em, and begun to lay up money towards buyin' 'em a house--a home.

He talked a sight, so folks said that knew him well, about his consumin' desire and aim to get his wife and children into a little home of their own, into a safe little haven, where they could live if he wuz called away. They say that that wuz on his mind day and night, and wuz what nerved his hand so in the fray, and made him so successful. Wall, he had laid up about nine hundred dollars towards a home, every dollar on it earned by hard work and consecrated by this deathless hope and affection. The house he had got his mind on only cost about a thousand dollars. Loontown property is cheap.

Wall, he had laid up nine hundred, and wuz a-beginnin' to save on the last hundred, for he wouldn't run in debt a cent any way, when he wuz took voyalent sick there to Cephas'ses; he and S. Annie had come home for a visit of a day or two, and he bein' so run down, and weak with his hard day work and his night work, that he suckumbed to his sickness, and passed away the day before I got there.

Wall, S. Annie wuz jest overcome with grief the day I got there, but the day follerin' she begun to take some interest and help her father in makin' preparations for the funeral.

The body wuz embalmed, accordin' to Cephas'ses and S. Annie's wish, and the funeral wuz to be on the Sunday follerin', and on that Cephas and S. Annie now bent their energies.

To begin with, S. Annie had a hull suit of clear crape made for herself, with a veil that touched the ground; she also had three other suits commenced, for more common wear, trimmed heavy with crape, one of which she ordered for sure the next week, for she said, "she couldn't stir out of the house in any other color but black."

I knew jest how dear crape wuz, and I tackled her on the subject, and sez I--

"Do you know, S. Annie, these dresses of your'n will cost a sight?"

"Cost?" sez she, a-bustin' out a-cryin'. "What do I care about cost? I will do everything I can to respect his memory. I do it in remembrance of him."

Sez I, gently, "S. Annie, you wouldn't forget him if you wuz dressed in white. And as for respect, such a life as his, from all I hear of it, don't need crape to throw respect on it; it commands respect, and gets it from everybody."

"But," sez Cephas, "it would look dretful odd to the neighbors if she didn't dress in black." Sez he in a skairful tone, and in his intense way--

[Illustration: "WHAT IS LIFE WORTH WHEN FOLKS TALK?"]

"I would ruther resk my life than to have her fail in duty in this way; it would make talk. And." sez he, "what is life worth when folks talk?" I turned around the crazed block and tackled it in a new place (more lunny than ever it seemed to me), and sez I, mekanickly--

"It is pretty hard work to keep folks from talkin'; to keep 'em from sayin' somethin'."

But I see from their looks it wouldn't do to say anything more, so I had to set still and see it go on.

At that time of year flowers wuz dretful high, but S. Annie and Cephas had made up their minds that they must have several flower-pieces from the city nighest to Loontown.

One wuz a-goin' to be a gate ajar, and one wuz to be a gate wide open, and one wuz to be a big book. Cephas asked what book I thought would be preferable to represent. And I mentioned the Bible.

But Cephas sez, "No, he didn't think he would have a Bible; he didn't think it would be appropriate, seein' the deceased wuz a lawyer." He said "he hadn't quite made up his mind what book to have. But anyway it wuz to be in flowers--beautiful flowers." Another piece wuz to be his name in white flowers on a purple background of pansies. His name wuz Wellington Napoleon Bonaparte Hardiman. And I sez to Cephas--"To save expense, you will probable have the moneygram W.N.B.H.?"

"Oh, no," sez he.

Sez I, "hen the initials of his given names, and the last name in full."

"Oh, no," he said; "it wuz S. Annie's wish, and hisen, that the hull name should be put on. They thought it would show more respect."

I sez, "Where Wellington is now, that hain't a goin' to make any difference, and," sez I, "Cephas, flowers are dretful high this time of year, and it is a long name."

But Cephas said agin that he didn't care for expense, so long as respect wuz done to the memory of the deceased. He said that he and S. Annie both felt that it wuz their wish to have the funeral go ahead of any other that had ever took place in Loontown or Jonesville. He said that S. Annie felt that it wuz all that wuz left her now in life, the memory of such a funeral as he deserved.

Sez I, "There is his children left for her to live for," sez I--"three little bits of his own life, for her to nourish, and cherish, and look out for."

"Yes," sez Cephas, "and she will do that nobly, and I will help her. They are all goin' to the funeral, too, in deep-black dresses." He said "they wuz too little to realize it now, but in later and maturer years it would be a comfort to 'em to know they had took part in such a funeral as that wuz goin' to be, and wuz dressed in black."

"Wall," sez I (in a quiet, onassumin' way I would gin little hints of my mind on the subject), "I am afraid that will be about all the comforts of life the poor little children will ever have," sez I. "It will be if you buy many more flower-pieces and crape dresses."

Cephas said "it wouldn't take much crape for the children's dresses, they wuz so little, only the baby's; that would have to be long."

Sez I, "The baby would look better in white, and it will take sights of crape for a long baby dress."

"Yes, but S. Annie can use it afterwards for veils. She is very economical; she takes it from me. And she feels jest as I do, that the baby must wear it in respect to her father's memory."

Sez I, "The baby don't know crape from a clothes-pin."

"No," sez Cephas, "but in after years the thought of the respect she showed will sustain her."

"Wall," sez I, "I guess she won't have much besides thoughts to live on, if things go on in this way."

I would give little hints in this way, but they wuzn't took. Things went right on as if I hadn't spoke. And I couldn't contend, for truly, as a bad little boy said once on a similar occasion, "it wuzn't my funeral," so I had to set and work on that insane bedquilt and see it go on. But I sithed constant and frequent, and when I wuz all alone in the room I indulged in a few low groans.

## CHAPTER X.

We dressmakers wuz in the house, to stay all the time till the dresses wuz done; and clerks would come around, anon, if not oftener, with packages of mournin' goods, and mournin' jewelry, and mournin' handkerchiefs, and mournin' stockings, and mournin' stockin'-supporters, and mournin' safety-pins, and etc., etc., etc., etc., etc.

Every one of 'em, I knew, a-wrenchin' boards offen the sides of that house that Wellington had worked so hard to get for his wife and little ones.

Wall, the day of the funeral come. It wuz a wet, drizzly day, but Cephas wuz up early, to see that everything wuz as he wanted it to be.

As fur as I wuz concerned, I had done my duty, for the crazy bedquilt wuz done; and though brains might totter as they looked at it, I felt that it wuzn't my fault. Sally Ann spread it out with complacency over the lounge, and thanked me, with tears in her eyes, for my noble deed.

Along quite early in the mornin', before the show commenced, I went in to see Wellington.

He lay there calm and peaceful, with a look on his face as if he had got away at last from a atmosphere of show and sham, and had got into the great Reality of life.

It wuz a good face, and the worryment and care that folks told me had been on it for years had all faded away. But the look of determination, and resolve, and bravery,—that wuz ploughed too deep in his face to be smoothed out, even by the mighty hand that had lain on it. The resolved look, the brave look with which he had met the warfare of life, toiled for victory over want, toiled to place his dear and helpless ones in a position of safety,—that look wuz on his face yet, as if the deathless hope and endeavor had gone on into eternity with him.

And by the side of him, on a table, wuz the big high flower-pieces, beginnin' already to wilt and decay.

Wall, it's bein' such an uncommon bad day, there wuzn't many to the funeral. But we rode to the meetin'-house in Loontown in a state and splendor that I never expect to again. Cephas had hired eleven mournin' coaches, and the day bein' so bad, and so few a-turnin' out to the funeral, that in order to occupy all the coaches--and Cephas thought it would look better and more popular to have 'em all occupied--we divided up, and Josiah went in one, alone, and lonesome as a dog, as he said afterwards to me. And I sot up straight and oncomfortable in another one on 'em, stark alone.

Cephas had one to himself, and his wife another one, and two old maids, sisters of Cephas'ses who always made a point of attendin' funerals, they each one of 'em had one. S. Annie and her children, of course, had the first one, and then the minister had one, and one of the trustees in the neighborhood had another; so we lengthened out into quite a crowd, all a-follerin' the shiny hearse, and the casket all covered with showy plated nails. I thought of it in jest that way, for Wellington, I knew, the real Wellington, wuzn't there. No, he wuz fur away--as fur as the Real is from the Unreal. Wall, we filed into the Loontown meetin'-house in pretty good shape. The same meetin'-house I had been sent to reconoiter. But Cephas hadn't no black handkerchief, and he looked worried about it. He had shed tears a-tellin' me about it, what a oversight it wuz, while I wuz a fixin' on his mournin' weed. He took it into his head to have a deeper weed at the last minute, so I fixed it on. He had the weed come up to the top of his hat and lap over. I never see so tall a weed. But it suited Cephas; he said "he thought it showed deep respect."

"Wall," sez I, "it is a deep weed, anyway--the deepest I ever see." And he said as I wuz a sewin' it on, he a-holdin' his hat for me, "that Wellington deserved it; he deserved it all."

But, as I say, he shed tears to think that his handkerchief wuzn't black-bordered. He said "it wuz a fearful oversight; it would probably make talk."

"But," I sez, "mebby it won't be noticed."

[Illustration: "AS A PROCESSION WE WUZ MIDDLEIN' LONG, BUT RUTHER THIN."]

"Yes, it will," sez he. "It will be noticed." And sez he, "I don't care about myself, but I am afraid it will reflect onto Wellington. I am afraid they will think it shows a lack of respect for him. For Wellington's sake I feel cut down about it."

And I sez, "I guess where Wellington is now, the color of a handkerchief border hain't a-goin' to make much difference to him either way."

And I don't spoze it wuz noticed much, for there wuzn't more'n ten or a dozen folks there when we went in. We went in in Injin file mostly by Cephas'ses request, so's to make more show. And as a procession we wuz middlin' long, but ruther thin.

The sermon wuz not so very good as to quality, but abundant as to

quantity. It wuz, as nigh as I could calkerlate, about a hour and three-quarters long. Josiah whispered to me along about the last that "we had been there over seven hours, and his legs wuz paralyzed."

And I whispered back that "seven hours would take us into the night, and to stretch his feet out and pinch 'em," which he did.

But it wuz long and tegus. My feet got to sleep twice, and I had hard work to wake 'em up agin. The sermon meant to be about Wellington, I s'pose; he did talk a sight about him, and then he kinder branched off onto politics, and then the Inter-State bill; he kinder favored it, I thought.

Wall, we all got drippin' wet a-goin' home, for Cephas insisted on our gettin' out at the grave, for he had hired some uncommon high singers (high every way, in price and in notes) to sing at the grave.

And so we disembarked in the drippin' rain, on the wet grass, and formed a procession agin. And Cephas had a long exercise light there in the rain. But the singin' wuz kinder jerky and curius, and they had got their pay beforehand, so they hurried it through. And one man, the tenor, who wuz dretful afraid of takin' cold, hurried through his part and got through first, and started on a run for the carriage. The others stood their grounds till the piece wuz finished, but they put on some dretful curius quavers. I believe they had had chills; it sounded like it.

Take it altogether, I don't believe anybody got much satisfaction out of it, only Cephas. S. Annie sp'ilt her dress and bonnet entirely--they wuz wilted all down; and she ordered another suit jest like it before she slept. Wall, the next mornin' early two men come with plans for monuments. Cephas had telegraphed to 'em to come with plans and bid for the job of furnishin' the monument.

And after a good deal of talk on both sides, Cephas and S. Annie selected one that wuz very high and p'inted.

The men stayed to dinner, and I said to Cephas out to one side--

"Cephas, that monument is a-goin' to cost a sight."

"Wall," sez he, "we can't raise too high a one. Wellington deserved it all."

Sez I, "Won't that and all these funeral expenses take about all the money he left?"

"Oh, no!" sez he. "He had insured his life for a large amount, and it all goes to his wife and children. He deserves a monument if a man ever did."

"But," sez I, "don't you believe that Wellington would ruther have S. Annie and the children settled down in a good little home with sumthin' left to take care of 'em, than to have all this money spent in perfectly useless things?"

"\_Useless!\_" sez Cephas, turnin' red. "Why," sez he, "if you wuzn't a near relation I should resent that speech bitterly."

"Wall," sez I, "what do all these flowers, and empty carriages, and silver-plated nails, and crape, and so forth--what does it all amount to?"

"Respect and honor to his memory," sez Cephas, proudly.

Sez I, "Such a life as Wellington's had them; no body could take 'em away nor deminish 'em. Such a brave, honest life is crowned with honor and respect any way. It don't need no crape, nor flowers, nor monuments to win 'em. And, at the same time," sez I dreamily, "if a man is mean, no amount of crape, or flower-pieces, or flowery sermons, or obituries, is a-goin' to cover up that meanness. A life has to be lived out-doors as it were; it can't be hid. A string of mournin' carriages, no matter how long, hain't a-goin' to carry a dishonorable life into honor, and no grave, no matter how low and humble it is, is a-goin' to cover up a honorable life.

"Such a life as Wellington's don't need no monument to carry up the story of his virtues into the heavens; it is known there already. And them that mourn his loss don't need cold marble words to recall his goodness and faithfulness. The heart where the shadow of his eternal absence has fell don't need crape to make it darker.

"Wellington wouldn't be forgot if S. Annie wore pure white from day today. No, nobody that knew Wellington, from all I have hearn of him, needs crape to remind 'em that he wuz once here and now is gone.

"Howsomever, as fur as that is concerned, I always feel that mourners must do as they are a mind to about crape, with fear and tremblin'--that is, if they are well off, and \_can\_ do as they are a mind to; and the same with monuments, flowers, empty coaches, etc. But in this case, Cephas Bodley, I wouldn't be a doin' my duty if I didn't speak my mind. When I look at these little helpless souls that are left in a cold world with nothin' to stand between them and want but the small means their pa worked so hard for and left for the express purpose of takin' care of 'em, it seems to me a foolish thing, and a cruel thing, to spend all that money on what is entirely onnecessary."

"Onnecessary!" sez Cephas, angrily. "Agin I say, Josiah Allen's wife, that if it wuzn't for our close relationship I should turn on you. A worm will turn," sez he, "if it is too hardly trampled on."

"I hain't trampled on you," sez I, "nor hain't had no idea on't. I wuz only statin' the solemn facts and truth of the matter. And you will see it some time, Cephas Bodley, if you don't now."

Sez Cephas, "The worm has turned, Josiah Allen's wife! Yes, I feel that I have got to look now to more distant relations for comfort. Yes, the worm has been stomped on too heavy."

He looked cold, cold as a iceickle almost. And I see that jest the few words I had spoke, jest the slight hints I had gin, hadn't been took as they should have been took. So I said no more. For agin the remark of that little bad boy came up in my mind and restrained me from sayin' any more.

Truly, as the young male child observed, "it wuzn't my funeral."

We went home almost immegetately afterwards, my heart nearly a-bleedin'



for the little children, poor little creeters, and Cephas actin' cold and distant to the last And we hain't seen 'em sence. But news has come from them, and come straight. Josiah heerd to Jonesville all about it. And though it is hitchin' the democrat buggy on front of the mare--to tell the end of the funeral here--yet I may as well tell it now and be done with it.

The miller at Loontown wuz down to the Jonesville mill to get the loan of some bags, and Josiah happened to be there to mill that day, and heerd all about it.

Cephas had got the monument, and the ornaments on it cost fur more than he expected. There wuz a wreath a-runnin' round it clear from the bottom to the top, and verses a kinder runnin' up it at the same time. And it cost fearful. Poetry a-runnin' up, they say, costs fur more than it duz on a level.

Any way, the two thousand dollars that wuz insured on Wellington's life wuzn't quite enough to pay for it. But the sale of his law library and the best of the housen' stuff paid it. The nine hundred he left went, every mite of it, to pay the funeral expenses and mournin' for the family.

[Illustration: CARRIED TO THE COUNTY POOR HOUSE.]

And as bad luck always follers on in a procession, them mortgages of Cephas'ses all run out sort o' together. His creditors sold him out, and when his property wuz all disposed of it left him over fourteen hundred dollars in debt.

The creditors acted perfectly greedy, so they say--took everything they could; and one of the meanest ones took that insane bedquilt that I finished. That \_wuz\_ mean. They say Sally Ann crumpled right down when that wuz took. Some say that they got hold of that tall weed of Cephas'ses, and some dispute it; some say that he wore it on the last ride he took in Loontown.

But, howsomever, Cephas wuz took sick, Sally Ann wuzn't able to do anything for their support, S. Annie wuz took down with the typhus, and so it happened the very day the monument wuz brought to the Loontown cemetery, Cephas Bodley's folks wuz carried to the county house, S. Annie, the children and all.

And it happened dretful curius, but the town hired that very team that drawed the monument there, to take the family back.

It wuz a good team.

The monument wuzn't set up, for they lacked money to pay for the underpinnin'! (Wuz n't it curius, Cephas Bodley never would think of the underpinnin' to anything?) But it lay there by the side of the road, a great white shape.

And they say the children wuz skairt, and cried when they went by it--cried and wept.

But I believe it wuz because they wuz cold and hungry that made 'em cry. I don't believe it wuz the monument.

## CHAPTER XI.

[Illustration:]

A few days follerin' on and ensuin' after this eppisode, Submit Tewksburv wuz a takin' supper with me. She had come home with me from the meetin' house where we had been to work all day.

I had urged her to stay, for she lived a mile further on the road, and had got to walk home afoot.

And she hain't any too well off, Submit hain't--she has to work hard for every mite of food she eats, and clothes she wears, and fuel and lights, etc., etc.

So I keep her to dinners and suppers all I can, specially when we are engaged in meetin' house work, for as poor as Submit is, she will insist on doin' for the meetin' house jest as much as any other female woman in Jonesville.

She is quite small boneded, and middlin' good lookin' for a women of her years. She has got big dark eyes, very soft and mellow lookin' in expression--and a look deep down into 'em, as if she had been waitin' for something, for some time. Her hair is gettin' quite gray now, but its original color was auburn, and she has got quite a lot of it--kinder crinkly round her forward. Her complexion is pale. She is a very good lookin' woman yet, might marry any day of the week now, I hain't no doubt of it. She is a single woman, but is well thought on in Jonesville, and the southern part of Zoar, where she has relatives on her mother's side.

[Illustration: SUBMIT TEWKSBURY.]

She has had chances to my certain knowledge (widowers and such).

But if all the men in the world should come and stand in rows in front of her gate with gilded crowns in their hands all ready to crown her, and septers all ready for her to grasp holt of, and wield over the world, she would refuse every one of 'em.

She has had a disappointment, Submit has. And she looked at the world so long through tears, that the world got to lookin' sort o' dim like and shadowy to her, and the whole men race looked to her fur off and misty, as folks will when you look at 'em through a rain.

She couldn't marry one of them shadows of men, if she tried, and she hain't never tried. No, her heart always has been, and is now, fur away, a-travellin' through unknown regions, unknown, and yet more real to her than Jonesville or Zoar, a-follerin' the one man in the world who is a reality to her. Submit wuz engaged to a young Methodist minister by the name of Samuel Danker. I remember him well. A good lookin' young fellow at the time, with blue eyes and light hair, ruther long and curly, and kinder wavin' back from his forward, and a deep spiritual look in his eyes. In fact, his eyes looked right through the fashions and folls of the civilized world, into the depths of ignorance, rivers of ruin and

despair, that wuz a-washin' over a human race, black jungles where naked sin and natural depravities crouched hungry for victims.

Samuel Danker felt that he had got to go into heathen lands as a missionary. He wuz engaged to Submit, and loved her dearly, and he urged her to go too.

But Submit had a invalid father on her hands, a bed rid grandfather, and three young brothers, too young to earn a thing, and they all on 'em together hadn't a cent of money to their names. They had twenty-five acres of middlin' poor land, and a old house.

Wall, Submit felt that she couldn't leave these helpless ones and go to more foreign heathen lands. So, with a achin' heart, she let Samuel Danker go from her, for he felt a call, loud, and she couldn't counsel him to shet up his ears, or put cotton into 'em. Submit Tewksbury had always loved and worked for the Methodist meetin' house (she jined it on probation when she wuz thirteen). But although she always had been extremely liberal in givin', and had made a practice of contributin' every cent she could spare to the meetin' house, it wuz spozed that Samuel Danker wuz the biggest offerin' she had ever give to it.

Fur it wuz known that he went to her the night before he sot sail, took supper with her, and told her she should decide the matter for him, whether he went or whether he staid.

It wuz spozed his love for Submit wuz so great that it made him waver when the time come that he must leave her to her lot of toil and sacrifice and loneliness.

But Submit loved the Methodist meetin' house to that extent, she leaned so hard on the arm of Duty, that she nerved up her courage anew, refused to accept the sacrifice of his renunciation, bid him go to his great work, and quit himself like a man--told him she would always love him, pray for him, be constant to him. And she felt that the Master they both wanted to serve would some day bring him back to her.

So he sailed away to his heathens--and Submit stayed to home with her five helpless males and her achin' heart. And if I had to tell which made her the most trouble, I couldn't to save my life.

She knew the secret of her achin' heart, and the long dark nights she kep awake with it. The neighbors couldn't understand that exactly, for there hain't no language been discovered yet that will give voice to the silent crys of a breakin' heart, a tender heart, a constant heart, cryin' out acrost the grayness of dreary days acrost the blackness of lonely nights.

But we could see her troubles with the peevisish paralasys of age, with the tremendus follys of undisciplined youth.

But Submit took care of the hull caboodle of 'em; worked out some by days' works, to get more necessaries for 'em than the poor little farm would bring in; nursed the sick on their sick-beds and on their death-beds, till she see 'em into Heaven--or that is where we spoze they went to, bein' deservin' old males both on 'em, her father and her grandfather, and in full connectin with the Methodist Episcopel meetin' house.

She took care of her young brothers, patient with 'em always, ready to mend bad rents in their clothin' and their behavior--tryin' to prop up their habits and their morals, givin' 'em all the schoolin' she could, givin' 'em all a good trade, all but the youngest, him she kep with her always till the Lord took him (scarlet fever), took him to learn the mysterius trade of the immortals.

Submit had a hard fit of sickness after that. And when she got up agin, there wuz round her pale forward a good many white hairs that wuz orburn before the little boy went away from her.

Sense that, the other boys have married, and Submit has lived alone in the old farm-house, lettin' the farm out on shares. It is all run down; she don't get much from it; it don't yield much but trouble and burdocks, but as little as she gets, she always will, as I say, do her full share, and more than her share, for the meetin' house.

[Illustration: "HE TOOK SUPPER WITH HER FOR THE LAST TIME."]

Some think it is on account of her inherient goodness, and some think it is on account of Samuel Danker.

We all spose she hain't forgot Samuel. And they do say that every year when the day comes round, that he took supper with her for the last time, she puts a plate on for him--the very one he eat on last---a pink edged chiny plate, with gilt sprigs, the last one left of her mother's first set of chiny.

That is what they \_say\_, I hain't never seen the plate.

It is now about twenty years sense Samuel Danker went to heathen lands. And as it wuz a man-eatin' tribe he went to preach to, and as he hain't been heern of from that day to this, it is spozed that they eat him up some years ago.

But it is thought that Submit hain't gin up hope yet. We spoze so, but don't know, on account of her never sayin' anything on the subject. But we judge from the plate.

Wall, as I say (and I have episoded fearfully, fearfully), Submit took supper with me that night. And after Josiah had put out his horse (he had been to Jonesville for the evenin' mail, and stopped for us at the meetin' house on his way back), he took the \_World\_ out of his pocket, and perused it for some time, and from that learned the great news that wimmen wuz jest about to be held up agin, to see if her strength wuz sufficient to set on the Conference.

And oh! how Josiah Allen went on about it to Submit and me, all the while we wuz a eatin' supper--and for more'n a hour afterwuds.

## CHAPTER XII.

Submit wuz very skairt to heern him go on (she felt more nervous on account of an extra hard day's work), and I myself wuz beat out, but I wuzn't afraid at all of him, though he did go on elegant, and dretful

empresive and even skairful.

He stood up on the same old ground that men have always stood up on, the ground of man's great strength and capability, and wimmen's utter weakness, helplessness, and incapacity. Josiah enlarged almost wildly on the subject of how high, how inaccessiblely lofty the Conference wuz, and the utter impossibility of a weak, helpless, fragaile bein' like a women ever gettin' up on it, much less settin' on it. And then, oh how vividly he depicteded it, how he and every other male Methodist in the land loved wimmen too well, worshipped 'em too deeply to put such a wearin' job onto 'em. Oh how Josiah Allen soared up in eloquence. Submit shed tears, or, that is, I thought she did--I see her wipe her eyes any way. Some think that about the time the Samuel Danker anniversary comes round, she is more nervous and deprested. It wuz very near now, and take that with her hard work that day, it accounts some for her extra depression--though, without any doubt, it wuz Josiah's talk that started the tears.

I couldn't bear to see Submit look so mournful and deprested, and so, though I wuz that tired myself that I could hardly hold my head up, yet I did take my bits in my teeth, as you may say, and asked him--

What the awful hard job wuz that he and other men wuz so anxus to ward offen wimmen.

And he sez, "Why, a settin' on the Conference."

And I sez, "I don't believe that is such a awful hard job to tackle."

"Yes, indeed, it is," sez Josiah in his most skairful axent, "yes, it is."

And he shook his head meenin'ly and impresively, and looked at me and Submit in as mysterius and strange a way, es I have ever been looked at in my life, and I have had dretful curius looks cast onto me, from first to last. And he sez in them deep impresive axents of hisen,

"You jest try it once, and see--I have sot on it, and I know."

Josiah wuz sent once as a delegate to the Methodist Conference, so I spozed he did know.

But I sez, "Why you come home the second day when you sot as happy as a king, and you told me how you had rested off durin' the two days, and how you had visited round at Uncle Jenkins'es, and Cousin Henn's, and you said that you never had had such a good time in your hull life, as you did when you wuz a settin'. You looked as happy as a king, and acted so."

Josiah looked dumbfounded for most a quarter of a minute. For he knew my words wuz as true es anything ever sot down in Matthew, Mark, or Luke, or any of the other old patriarks. He knew it wuz Gospel truth, that he had boasted of his good times a settin', and as I say for nearly a quarter of a minute he showed plain signs of mortification.

But almost imegietly he recovered himself, and went on with the doggy obstinacy of his sect: "Oh, wall! Men can tackle hard jobs, and get some enjoyment out of it too, when it is in the line of duty. One thing that boys em' up, and makes em' happy, is the thought that they are a keepin'

trouble and care offen wimmen. That is a sweet thought to men, and always wuz. And there wuz great strains put onto our minds, us men that sot, that wimmen couldn't be expected to grapple with, and hadn't ort to try to. It wuz a great strain onto us."

"What was the nater of the strain?" sez I. "I didn't know as you did a thing only sot still there and go to sleep. \_You\_ wuz fast asleep there most the hull of the time, for it come straight to me from them that know. And all that Deacon Bobbet did who went with you wuz to hold up his hand two or three times a votin'. I shouldn't think that wuz so awful wearin'."

And agin I sez, "What wuz the strain?"

But Josiah didn't answer, for that very minute he remembered a pressin' engagement he had about borrowin' a plow. He said he had got to go up to Joe Charnick's to get his plow. (I don't believe he wanted a plow that time of night.) But he hurried away from the spot. And soon after Submit went home lookin' more deprested and down-casted than ever.

And Josiah Allen didn't get home till \_late\_ at night. I dare presume to say it wuz as late as a quarter to nine when that man got back to the bosom of his family.

And I sot there all alone, and a-meditatin' on things, and a-wonderin' what under the sun he wuz a-traipsin up to Joe Charnick's for at that time of night, and a-worryin' some for fear he wuz a-keepin' Miss Charnick up, and a-spozin' in my mind what Miss Charnick would do, to get along with the meetin' house, and the Conference question, if she wuz a member. (She is a \_very\_ sensible woman, Jenette Charnick is, \_very\_, and a great favorite with me, and others.)

And I got to thinkin' how prosperous and happy she is now, and how much she had went through. And I declare the hull thing come back to me, all the strange and curius circumstances connected with her courtship and marriage, and I thought it all out agin, the hull story, from beginnin' to end.

The way it begun wuz--and the way Josiah Allen and me come to have any connectin with the story wuz as follers:

Some time ago, and previus, we had a widder come to stay with us a spell, she that wuz Tamer Shelmadine, Miss Trueman Pool that now is.

Her husband died several years ago, and left her not over and above well off. And so she goes round a-visitin', and has went ever sense his death. And finds sights of faults with things wherever she is, sights of it.

Trueman wuz Josiah's cousin, on his own side, and I always made a practice of usin' her quite well. She used to live neighbor to me before I wuz married, and she come and stayed nine weeks.

She is a tall spindlin' woman, a Second Adventist by perswasion, and weighs about ninety-nine pounds.

Wall, as I say, she means middlin' well, and would be quite agreeable if it wuzn't for a habit she has of thinkin' what she duz is a leetle better than anybody else can do, and wantin' to tell a leetle better

story than anybody else can.

Now she thinks she looks better than I do. But Josiah sez she can't begin with me for looks, and I don't spoze she can, though of course it hain't to be expected that I would want it told of that I said so. No, I wouldn't want it told of pro or con, especially con. But I know Josiah Allen has always been called a pretty good judge of wimmen's looks.

[Illustration: "SHE IS A TALL SPINDLIN' WOMAN."]

And now she thinks she can set hens better than I can--and make better riz biscuit. She jest the same as told me so. Any way, the first time I baked bread after she got here, she looked down on my loaves real haughty, yet with a pityin' look, and sez:

"It is very good for yeast, but I always use milk emptin's."

And she kinder tested her head, and sort o' swept out of the room, not with a broom, no, she would scorn to sweep out a room with a broom or help me in any way, but she sort o' swept it out with her mean. But I didn't care, I knew my bread wuz good.

Now if anybody is sick, she will always tell of times when she has been sicker. She boasts of layin' three nights and two days in a fit. But we don't believe it, Josiah and me don't. That is, we don't believe she lay there so long, a-runnin'.

We believe she come out of 'em occasionally.

But you couldn't get her to give off a hour or a minute of the time. Three nights and two days she lay there a-runnin', so she sez, and she has said it so long, that we spoze, Josiah and me do, that she believes it herself now.

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