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Paul said that we should be given to hospitality."

"Yes, I know," replied Marcia, reflectively. "And wasn't it also St. Paul who said that we should be patient in tribulation? I guess that he had ministers' families in mind when he said that. There is certainly a good deal of tribulation about entertaining guests whose only claim to your hospitality is that they have a third cousin or a dead-and-gone aunt who was a member of your church twenty years ago."

"Oh, it isn't often so bad as that," Mr. Linn said, with a laugh.

"Wasn't it only last month that a woman came here and stayed a week on the strength of your grandfather and her grandfather having roomed together when they were at college? And didn't another woman come here with the awfulest boy that ever lived, and stay five dreadful days and nights, on the score of you having married her to her first husband? And you owned up to me that he didn't give you any fee for performing the ceremony!"

"Well, he turned out so badly," said the minister, "that perhaps she felt I owed her something, and so she came and boarded it out."

"You are too good and too gullible for this earth," answered Marcia, with a ringing laugh. But she was not inclined to laugh at the time of the beginning of this story. She had just "got rid," as she frankly and tersely expressed it, of a troublesome and most inconsiderate guest, who had remained a week at the crowded little parsonage, basing her claim to hospitality on the fact that her uncle had once been a deacon in a church of which Mr. Linn had been the pastor.

"And she didn't make her own bed, nor get up in time to eat breakfast with us!" exclaimed Marcia, with just indignation. "And she wanted a fresh napkin every meal, and she asked me to send the children out of the house for two hours every afternoon while she took a nap of that duration. And I do not think that I shall ever achieve a greater moral victory in this life than I achieved when I kept my tongue still though she brought me a pair of her ripped gloves and asked me to take a few stitches in them. And now comes this!"

As she spoke, she held out a letter to her father. He took it, adjusted his glasses, and read, in cramped and peculiar writing and spelling, these words:

Dere Brother Linn, i am agoing to pass thre your Town next friday on my way to vissit some kin of Mine over in Zoar and i will stop over for a fue days vissit with your family if Agreeable. i shell enjoy talking over old Times here in Lisbon with you when you was our pasture. your preachin done me good an you didnt holler as if we was all deaf and beat the pulpit as if you had a spite again it like your suckessor, but he means well an what he says is good. So i will be thare next friday so meat me at the trane to see about my trunk an my love to your wife. So no more at presunt from

Ann Packer.

Mr. Linn's blue eyes twinkled as he read this letter, and a smile played around his lips in spite of Marcia's evident dismay—which was great, or her sense of humor would have caused her to shout with laughter over Ann Packer's epistle. She was not in a laughing mood, although she did smile when her father said merrily:

"I must not fail to be at the train to see about Sister Packer's trunk and her love to your mother."

"Can't you bring the love home and send the trunk and Sister Packer some place else?"

"I fear not, dear. It is some years since I saw Ann Packer, but I remember her as a good woman whom I should be sorry to offend."

"But then, one must cook and wash dishes and spend time entertaining even the best of women, father."

"I feel sure that Ann Packer will make her own bed, and that she will not ask you to do any of her sewing."

"If she does, my moral powers will weaken, and I will Packer off in haste."

"Your mental powers must be weak-

ening even now or you would never petrify such a pun as that," replied Mr. Linn, giving the pink lobe of Marcia's ear a little pinch, and then stooping to kiss her flushed face, while he added: "Don't worry, daughter. Let us be patient in tribulation. Sometime we shall entertain an angel unawares. I must go and tell your mother about Ann Packer."

"Well, I suppose that there is nothing to be done but to grin and bear it," said Marcia, when her father had left the room. "I may as well go and get the spare room ready for Ann Packer. I do hope that she will be less exasperating than the last occupant of the room. 'Given to hospitality' is certainly one of the enforced duties of a minister's family."

Marcia's good humor soon asserted itself, and she smiled as she recalled some of the lines in Mrs. Packer's quaint letter. The guest-chamber had been made ready for the expected visitor, and Marcia was in the kitchen mixing a pudding for dinner when her father arrived with Mrs. Packer. Marcia put aside her work and went into the little parlor, where she saw a large, round-faced, motherly-looking woman, wearing an old-fashioned bonnet, a simple brown merino dress, and a very old-fashioned black crape shawl, with fringe half a yard long. She wore black lace mitts, and her narrow strip of white collar was fastened by an enormous cameo-brooch. Her abundant black hair, well streaked with gray, was brushed down smooth and shining over the tops of her ears. She greeted Marcia with loud-voiced and smiling friendliness.

"How do do, my child?" she said. "The last time I saw you you wa'n't knee-high to a duck. I remember just as well the day you was born! Susan Peek come over to my house and told me about it, and I remember of sending your ma a glass of my currant jelly and you a pair of little blue-and-white baby socks. You moved away from our town when you was still a tiny baby, and I ain't laid eyes on you from that day to this. You favor your ma a good deal, as I remember her. Pa tells me that your ma is sick. I'm real sorry to hear that I wouldn't have stopped off here if I had knowed that. But mebbe I can do something for her or help you out in some way. I'm used to all kinds of sickness, and they always sends for Ann Packer in any time of sickness or trouble of any sort, back where I live, and I always go and help out, and it's a real pleasure to be able to do it. You just show me my room, and I'll git into my working clothes, and then you set me doing something."

"Wouldn't you like to lie down and rest until dinner-time?" asked Marcia, her heart warming toward this rare type of visitor.

"La, no! I never was a person who could lay down in the daytime. Then, I ain't a mite tired. The car-ride over the country was so pleasant I just enjoyed every mile of it. Seems like I never saw the country so beautiful as it is now. I fell in with some real pleasant folks on the train—I always do when I travel—and we visited and chatted together and enjoyed ourselves until I was real sorry when my journey was at an end. Now I'm goin' to git on another dress and an apron, and whirl right in and help you out some-way. You show me where things are, and I'll git dinner if your ma needs you. Now you go right off to your study, Brother Linn. Don't you for one minute think that you've got to set round and entertain me."

She gathered up her numerous pieces of hand-luggage as she spoke, and she said, as Marcia led the way upstairs:

"I got a lot o' things here for your little brothers and sisters—some toys, and a bag of bananas, and another of candy, and a dozen oranges. They had such elegant oranges over in Springfield, where I changed cars, and I thought it likely that you couldn't git anything like them in this little town, so I fetched you some."

"Oh, I am so grateful to you!" replied Marcia. "Mother said this very day that there was nothing she would enjoy so much as a real good orange."