

"Poor Tim!" said John; "I thought he was way out in Californy. Give me my overcoat, Lucy; and James, you hitch up the horse. I'll be there," said he, turning to the man, "as quick as my beast can carry me."

"Now, John," said his wife, "you ar'nt going off without a mouthful of supper this cold night?"

"Can't stop for that, wife; the poor fellow may die before I get there now."

"Well, Lucy, you stuff some of that johnny-cake into your father's pocket, and I'll get some of my current wine for poor Tim. Like as not that will give him a start yet."

Betsy Bolton had one of the kindest of hearts in spite of her gunpowder temper, and after an explosion of the kind narrated was sure to outdo herself in kindness to some one. So, when John was ready to start, his empty stomach was cheered by the prospect of the bountiful supper filling his capacious pockets, and he was loaded down with numerous comforts and delicacies for the sick man.

It was a cheerless ride he had through the dark woods, with the cold March wind blowing the snow into his face and eyes; but at last he arrived at the little red hut. A single tallow-candle was burning in the window, and everything around betokened extreme poverty. Tim was lying on a miserable bed, in a corner. His face was pale and emaciated; and the air from the door, as John entered, caused a fit of coughing that seemed to wrench his whole frame.

"How d'ye do, John?" said he, stretching out his bony hand. "It's a hard night to ask a body to come out and see a poor sinner like me; but it's my last tack, John; it's my last tack."

"Oh no, Tim," said his companion; "you're good for a long voyage yet."

"No, no; it's all over. I've sailed my last cruise. When we were boys together, you didn't think I'd pull up on this bare track, did ye, John? It's my own fault, it's my own fault."

He was interrupted by a violent fit of coughing. John propped him up with pillows. He tried to speak, but gasped for breath. At last, getting a little quieted, he went on:

"I can't last long, John, and I must tell you my secret before it is too late. When I was in the mines in Californy, there was a fellow working near me, that I got to love like a brother. He wasn't a great rough fellow like me, but he was as gentle as a woman. We used to be very happy together, till one day that infernal temper of mine got the best of me, and I lifted my iron drill and struck him. O God! I shall never forget that look he gave me, as he lay there weltering in his blood. I