

neighbors came hurrying in, and that she was pitiably drawn away, while other less trembling, and so more efficient hands worked over the motionless form that she scarcely dared look upon. She wandered away to the kitchen, where her work all stood as she had left it, and found herself wondering vaguely how she could ever have been interested in such pitiable, trifling things! But death had never entered their home; it had seemed to her something dim and far away—almost beyond thought—one little hour ago.

She stole to her room, listening for, yet scarcely daring to hear, any word of hope or doom that might be spoken in the adjoining apartment. Closets and drawers had been thrown open with eager hands, to furnish articles that were needed, and her eyes fell upon a little suit of clothes hanging there—the ones Joe had coaxed for only that noon, and been refused. She wanted to keep them from soiling—perchance she had done it forever. An added pang forced its sharp way even through her steady agony—a feeling that she had defrauded her child. It was unendurable; she shuddered and turned away.

"There's life there," said a low voice in the next room.

The mother bent her ear eagerly, every breath a prayer, while the brief silence that followed seemed interminable.

"Oh! he's breathing!" said another. "Poor fellow! he's had a narrow chance. Stand away a little, some of you, and give him more air."

Slowly he struggled back to life; the breathing became more natural, his eyes unclosed again, and the dread shadow of death lifted and passed away. Friends, no longer needed, slipped out one after another, with a mingling of congratulatory smiles and tears, and the mother watched beside her boy—a quiet sleeper—scanning the pale face with steady, eager eyes, to be quite sure that she was not dreaming.

Upon her silent watching broke a step, not heavy, but wondrously firm, and Aunt Prudy Greer walked in—aunt and nurse to the whole neighborhood.

"Heard about it, an' come to stay a spell," she announced briefly, depositing her work-bag and untying her bonnet. "How came he to be pokin' round the pond, anyway?" she questioned when she was comfortably established. "Thought all the children in these parts would be down at the school-house this afternoon."

"Joe did want to go, but I thought—that is—we decided it wasn't best they should go to the picnic," Mrs. Moore explained in a reluctant way, unlike her usual assured manner. "You see," she continued, reading the dissent in Aunt Prudy's gray eyes, "there would have to

be some new clothes bought, and rich cake made, and, altogether, it would take a good deal of time and bother, and I didn't know how to be troubled with it. Then it would cost something, too—not but what we could do it as well as some others—but such things seem sort of foolish. We're trying to lay up for the children, and it will be more use to 'em by and by."

"Will it?" asked Aunt Prudy, slowly. "Layin' up, layin' up!" she repeated musingly. "That's all very well, but I've lived long enough to learn that it's best to be very careful what we lay up. There's such a thing as layin' up bitter memories and everlasting regrets—I've seen it. There's people, too, that robs the time that is to lay up for a time that never comes—like that man in the Bible with his 'much goods laid up for many years,' an' he never had the many years, you see. 'Whose shall those things be?' It don't say whose they was; I s'pose it don't matter. If little Joe had been laid up in heaven to-day, why, his portion—well! well! I don't know! It's all well and wise to look out for the coming years when we can; but then they're uncertain—mighty uncertain—and I'd try an' lay up a happy childhood for the children, Ellen, while I had 'em. There's a deal of meanin' in that verse about 'moth and rust,' if we could only get down to it."

The mother shivered, but made no reply; she was thinking too deeply for that. Had they been robbing the children? They had tried to teach them to work, save and plan as they did, but was that, after all, the highest, noblest life? She had worked for her children so hurriedly and busily that she had found no time to sympathize with them, to make them happy, to show her love in the little things that came up day by day. Would broad lands altogether atone for there being no happy home life to treasure up? no days marked with a white stone? no tender memories? Was their present of so much less importance than their earthly future would be if they lived? and if not—

"No, David, this straining, hurried, crowded life isn't the best for now or afterward," she said, when she and her husband talked the matter over that evening.

The "south meadow" was not purchased, but greener and fairer possessions far came into the family, as sweet poetry began to mingle with life's earnest prose, and the old yellow farm-house slowly blossomed into brightness and beauty. Years afterward, Mr. Moore was wont to say with an odd smile, that his most fruitful field was the one he never bought; it yielded the richest harvest.—*Wood's Household Magazine.*