

"Surely you have, for so doing, the strongest considerations."

Another pause ensued, and then Jarvis said, while the color mounted to his cheek—

"If you are willing, Mr. Lankford, I should like you to deduct only one-half of what I owe you for those furs I took from you, from this week's wages. My family are in want of a great many things; and I am particularly desirous of buying a barrel of flour to-night."

"Say nothing of that, John. Let it be forgotten with your past misdeeds. Here are your wages—twelve dollars—and if it gives you as much pleasure to receive as it does me to pay them, then you feel no ordinary degree of satisfaction."

Mr. Jarvis received the large sum for him to possess, and hurried away to a grocery. Here he bought, for six dollars, a barrel of flour, and expended two dollars more of his wages in sugar, coffee, tea, molasses, &c. Near to the store was the market-house. Thence he repaired, and bought meat and various kinds of vegetables, with butter, &c. These he carried to the store, and gave directions to have all sent home to him. He had now two dollars left out of the twelve he had earned since Monday morning, and with these in his pocket, he returned home. As he drew near the house, his heart fluttered in anticipation of the delightful change that would pass upon all beneath its humble roof. He had never, in his life, experienced feelings of such real joy.

A few moments brought him to the door, and he went in with the quick step that had marked his entrance for several days. It was not quite dark, and his wife sat sewing by the window. She was finishing a pair of pantaloons that had to go home that very evening, and with the money she was to get for them, she expected to buy the Sunday dinner. There was barely enough food in the house for supper; and unless she received her pay for this piece of work, she had no means of getting the required sustenance for herself and children—or rather, for her husband, herself and children. The individual for whom it was intended, was not a prompt pay-master, and usually grumbled whenever Mrs. Jarvis asked him for money. To add to the circumstances of concern and trouble of mind, she felt almost ready to give up, from the excessive pain in her breast, and the weakness of her whole frame. As her husband came in, she turned upon him an anxious and troubled countenance; and then bent down over her work, and plied her needle hurriedly. As the twilight fell dimly around, she drew nearer and nearer to the window, and at last stood up, and leaned close up to the panes of glass, so that her hand almost touched, in order to catch the few feeble rays of light that were still visible. But she could not finish the garment upon which she wrought by the light of day. A candle was now lit, and she took her place by the table, not so much as glancing towards her husband, who had seated himself in a chair, with his youngest child on his knee. Half an hour passed in silence, and then Mrs. Jarvis rose up, having taken the last stitch in the garment she was making, and passed into the adjoining chamber. In a few minutes she came out, with her bonnet and shawl on, and the pair of pantaloons that she had just finished, on her arm.

"Where are you going, Jane?" her husband asked, in a tone of surprise, that seemed to cut her ear, mingled with disappointment.

"I am going to carry home my work."

"But I wouldn't go now, Jane. Wait until after supper."

"No, John. I cannot wait until after supper. The work will be wanted. It should have been home two hours ago."

And she glided from the room before he could make up his mind to detain her by telling the good news, that was trembling on his tongue for utterance.

A walk of a few minutes brought her to the door of a tailor's shop, around the front of which hung garments exposed for sale. This shop she entered, and presented the pair of pantaloons to a man who stood behind the counter. His face relaxed not a muscle as he took them, and made a careful examination of the work.

"They'll do," he at length said, tossing them aside, and resuming his employment of cutting out a garment.

Poor Mrs. Jarvis paused, dreading to utter her request. But necessity conquered the painful reluctance, and she said,

"Can you pay me for this pair, to-night, Mr. Willets?"

"No. I've got more money to pay on Monday than I know where to get, and cannot let a cent go out."

"But, Mr. Willets, I—"

"I don't want to hear any of your reasons, Mrs. Jarvis. You can't have the money to-night; and, any how, I don't see fit to pay out money in little dribs. The fact is," and he looked angrily at the poor woman, "if you don't stop this pestering me for money every whip-stich, I won't give you another job. I'm tired of it."

Mrs. Jarvis turned slowly away, and had nearly reached the door, when the thought of her children caused her to pause. To have them want for food, was a thought she could not bear. Thus far, she had been able to keep them from hunger, and to still keep them from his pangs, had she worked all day with unusual industry, although suffering much from pain and debility.

"I cannot go, Mr. Willets, without the money," she said, suddenly turning, and speaking in an excited tone.

"You will go, I'm thinking, madam," was the reply, while the tailor glanced angrily at her, and compressed his lips firmly.

"O, sir," changing her tone, "pay me what you owe me; I want it very much."

"O yes. So you all say. But I am used to such make-believers. You get no money out of me to-night, madam. That's a settled point. I'm angry now—so you had better go home at once; if you don't I'll never give you a stitch of work, so help—"

Mrs. Jarvis did not pause to hear the concluding words of the sentence.

"What shall I do," was the almost despairing question that she asked of herself, as she hurried towards her home. On entering the house, she made no remark, for there was no one to whom she could tell her troubles and disappointment, with even the most feeble hope of a word of comfort. Mechanically she proceeded to set the table, and serve up the last portion of food that remained. A loaf of bread, and a few slices of cold meat, made up her little store. As they were all about drawing up to the table, there was a loud knock at the door, which Mrs. Jarvis immediately answered.

"Does Mr. Jarvis live here?" asked a rough voice.

"Yes sir," was the reply.

"Well, here is a barrel of flour and some groceries for him. Shall I bring them in here, ma'am?"

"There must be some mistake, sir. They do not belong here. We have bought no barrel of flour or groceries."

"Is not this Mr. Jarvis's?"

"Yes."

"And number 40?"

"Yes."

"Then this is the place, for that was the direction given me."

"Yes, this is the place—bring them in," spoke up Jarvis, in an animated tone.

The drayman of course obeyed. First he rolled in the barrel of flour; then came a number of packages, evidently containing groceries; and, finally, one or two pieces of meat, and sundry lots of vegetables.

"If such is to pay?" asked Jarvis.

"Twenty-five cents, sir," responded the drayman, bowing.

The twenty-five cent piece was taken from his pocket with quite an air, and handed over. Then the drayman went out, and that little family were alone again. During the passage of the scene just described, the wife stood looking on with a stupid and bewildered air. When the drayman had departed, she turned to her husband, and said—

"John, where did these things come from?"

"I bought them, Jane."

"You bought them?"

"Yes, I bought them."

"And pray, John, what did you buy them with?"

"With the quarter of a dollar you gave to me on Monday."

"John!"

"It is true, Jane. With that quarter I went and joined the Washington Total Abstinence Society, and then went to work at Mr. Lankford's. Here is the result of one week's work, besides this silver," handing her all that remained, after making the purchases.