

had not told his parents. It would only worry them, he said. He had remained in town under treatment since the examinations, and had lately had the advice of a celebrated oculist. The great man's verdict was a cruel one—total blindness for two years at least and likely forever. A cataract now growing over one eye would ripen in two years. Its removal might give him back one eye: it was impossible to say. The other was sightless for all time.

"Oh father," cried the broken voice from behind the apron—"it's worse than anything else could be. He'd better never have gone to college."

"It's pretty bad," answered the old man in an uneven voice, that was harsh with the effort to control it, "but maybe the cataract can be taken off."

"It ain't likely" moaned the mother. "His eyes always was weak—even when he was a baby. They're like mine. Oh my poor, poor boy—but when's he comin' home?"

"To-morrow."

"We must get ready for him," she said more bravely, and then she went back to her ironing.

John came home next day. He was a tall man with a smooth honest face and stooped shoulders. He had very little luggage. His clothes were coarse and plain and he wore blue glasses.

The brakeman led him off the train. He lifted his head and listened for a moment when he was left alone on the platform, and then he hurried with short uncertain steps towards a little bent figure from whose direction had come the husky words: "I'm comin', my boy."

A moment later the student's firm slender hand was clasped in the father's brown stumpy one. There was little said but the boy knew he was welcomed home.

Poor fellow, his trouble had bowed him down, and his old hard-worked parents tried to cheer him. His father led him by the hand over the fields, through the garden, into the orchard, after a little down to the corner store, and, when the first hot rebellion had died out of his heart, into the little church.

There is no "hired help" at the farm. The mother plods about the household duties, irons and washes and bakes. The old farmer potters about the barns, sells a cow now and then, and looks half-sadly over the fields that are "out on shares."

Sometimes a letter comes for John from some college friend. It is often addressed to John Myers, B.A., and a cloud comes over the old father's face, as he looks from the coveted letters to his son's upturned face with its poor sightless eyes.

There are times when the burden presses heavily upon the farmer and his wife, but no word of complaining ever reaches John's ears. The boy is less unhappy now. He sits in the shade or moves carefully about the house and garden. Sometimes he talks almost cheerfully, as the old folks sit with him in the twilight, and when they are all silent, each knows that both of the others are silently hoping and praying that the doctor may have been a little wrong, and that the young man will be able to see when the cataract is removed.

