

far backwoods. The homestead and the fifty acres that Mary owned were all that was left to remind the neighbors of the "old Wells Farm."

Twelve months ago, a general sensation was caused in Newville by the advent of young Frank Grant, a promising young man. Strong and healthy, decided the mothers; pushing, said the fathers; handsome, chorused the maidens; and a jolly fellow, chimed in the brothers. With all these attractions, to say nothing of fifty acres of land and a good trade, is it surprising that he made an impression? or, that to be escorted home from meeting or singing-school by Frank Grant, was an honor worthy of eager competition? It did not take long to show where the preference rested, and all opposition gave way to sweet Mary Wells.

And now a great change came over the quiet life of the young country-girl. Outwardly, the life was still quiet, there was little change in manner or appearance. The same dresses were worn, the same daily routine faithfully performed. But the world of thought was all changed; the fleeting, uncertain fancies were all centred on one object. Castles were no longer filmy clouds, floating high up in the air, but very substantial pictures of ways and means. Life which, on looking back, appeared to have been an aimless, useless passage of days, weeks, and years, now looked only too short to love and be loved.

Such might have been the tenure of her thoughts as she sat waiting in "the room" round by the side-door, where we shall take advantage of our privilege to intrude.

It is warm, cozy, and inviting. The evenings are still cold; and, in consideration of Aunt Millicent's fast-ageing bones and cooling blood, there is a bright wood-fire in the stove, which has, however, driven our little Mary to the farthest end of the room—the most becoming situation she could have chosen, we immediately decide,—the ruddy rays from the open stove, without dazzling, just throw a warm tint over the picture. We heave a sigh of complete

satisfaction; we cannot help it, even at the risk of disturbing her reverie. That little figure, clad in a neatly-fitting brown homespun dress, relieved at the neck and wrists by dainty white frills; the shapely head, supported by the little hand which, though it has done many a good day's work, is by no means ill-formed; the glossy brown hair, brushed smoothly over the forehead, and bound within a dark chenille net; and, above all, the full, soft grey eye, fixed dreamily on the fire, with a world of love and intellect in its quiet depth, is just such a one as we would choose for a wife, as we would like to have her image go down to her children and grand-children, that they may love and imitate it. The old clock on the dresser strikes seven. The strokes are followed by a little stir in the hitherto quiet room. Aunt Milly opens her eyes, shrugs her shoulders, knits off one needle, and drops to sleep again. The little dreamer raises her eyes from the fire to the clock, and then turns them to the door with an expectant gaze; and though she again directs them to their old position, the fire no longer retains undisputed possession, but shares its honors with the clock. Again the little hammer performs its work—this time it is eight strokes. With a slightly impatient look at the door, Mary arouses herself, and goes over to put a couple of sticks on the fire, which, in the general lull, had kept time with the clock, and faithfully performed its work. Half kneeling on the hearth-mat, gazing on the crackling logs, and unconsciously stroking an old tabby who shares the mat with his mistress, and purrs with pleasure at the caress, not knowing and not caring that it is unwittingly given, she rests for a few minutes, and then a brisk, familiar step on the gravel-walk, followed by a well-known rap at the door, makes her spring up, and open it wide for Mr. Frank Grant.

"I have been keeping you waiting a long time, pet," he said, when the greetings were over, and they had taken their seats in Mary's old place at the far end of the room; "but you must blame Dr. Harris, or, rather,