

## JAEI'S FATE.

(SELECTED.)



**I**T was a sultry summer day under the emigrant sheds at Kingston; and Jael stood wiping the perspiration from her homely face and gazing sadly on the blue shining waters of Lake Ontario and the green islands beyond the harbor. It does not matter what her surname was. The crowd of people with whom she had been associated in a long voyage across the Atlantic know her only as Jael, the tallest, homeliest, and most feared woman in the ship. She was entered on the ship's books as Jael, aged nineteen; but her tall, gaunt form, long, coarse features, and sad, stern eyes made her appear a woman of thirty. Speculation was rife concerning her, but Jael tolerated no enquiries into her past history, and when they had reached Quebec all evidence of her well-known traits disappeared on a sudden. She sang, prayed, scolded no more, preserving a rigid coldness and reserve of manner up to the moment when she stands looking sadly out on the waters of the great inland sea.

Poor Jael! Alone in a strange land, without a friend to aid her in her need! She had been the daughter of a preaching cobbler, who left his bench to hammer Bethel pulpits and clothe the spiritual feet of men with the leather of Scripture, and as her father's clerk for eight years she had served him faithfully and so far as to take up the office herself when too much beer had prostrated him. She loved the hymns, the Bible stories and the majestic psalms. But the filth and uncertainty and meanness of her life tired her at last. Her father made her heavy life heavier by his abuse and his senseless beatings of a too faithful child, and one night she left him in the streets of Liverpool and set out in a vague yet hopeful way to see what a new world had to offer her.

And here were all its offerings around and before her—the quaint, lively city with its red-coated soldiers, the emigrant sheds, the great lake, and the awful loneliness.

The day was long and hung so heavily that a few enterprising spirits among the immigrants arranged an entertainment, and invited Jael to display any of her accomplishments for the amusement of the crowd. When it came to her turn she recited in her broad dialect, yet with a tenderness inconceivable in so coarse-looking a woman, the poem of "Bingen on the Rhine," and drew tears from the sympathetic immigrants at the thought of homes they would never see again.

Luke Bolger, standing in the background with an official of the place, studied her curiously.

"She is only nineteen," said the official, "and about the style of girl you would want."

"Jes' about said Luke. He stood watching her still, untill the official thought fit to arouse him.

"I have an idea," said Luke, "what's the use of hiring a girl and paying her a dollar a week for a hull summer, when by marrying her you wouldn't have to pay nawthin' at all? See?

"I see," said the official, "and I wish you luck! There's the girl for you, if you're not afraid to take a strange critter in hand."

"Trust me to manage the female critter," said Luke, as he snapped the old whip suggestively.

"Come along then," said the official, "and take everything as it goes, for by all accounts she's a queer one."

He led Luke to where Jael sat with moistened eyes.

"Jael," said he, "this is Luke Bolger, who wants to speak with you. You can believe whatever he tells you about himself. It's a pretty safe thing, because he