

wretched butter destined to be eaten with it, whilst the crisp brown pancakes, crullers and dainty preserves, that had at one time so frequently adorned his table, were things of the past. Still, with the generosity of a manly nature, he neither scolded nor grumbled, but contented himself with a laughing hint occasionally on the subject, never alluding to it, however, when his wife looked worried or troubled. Poor Genevieve did often make spasmodic efforts to acquire a small portion of the valuable science in which she was so lamentably deficient, but the results were always discouraging failures, and she was gradually coming to the fatal conclusion that it was no use to try. As if to make matters worse, Paul's sister, who had just been left a widow, wrote to announce that her health shaken by anxiety and fatigue during her husband's illness, required change of air, and she felt assured her brother and new sister would kindly receive her for a few weeks.

Ah! how honest Paul Durand dreaded that visit. How his heart ached as he thought of his poor little wife's short comings laid bare to the keen gaze of that pattern and model of housewives. As to Genevieve, herself, she counted the days and hours as the criminal counts the time that has to elapse before the execution of his sentence. Her suspense was not of long duration, for three days after her letter, Mrs. Chartrand arrived. Despite her recent bereavement, which she really deeply felt; despite her own somewhat shaken health and energy, the state of matters in her brother's household alarmed, almost horrified her. Vague rumors had indeed occasionally reached her ear of the housekeeping deficiencies of her new sister-in-law, but occupied entirely with her husband, who had been confined to his room three or four months previous to his death, she had scarcely heeded them. Now, they burst upon her in all their appalling reality, and perhaps no greater distraction to her legitimate sorrow could have been found than the new field of regret thus opened to her.

"How," she inwardly asked herself, "can I find time to grieve for my poor Louis' loss, when I see such wretched bread, such uneatable butter on my brother's table? How can I dwell on my own state of lonely widowhood, when I see those abominable servants of my brother's gossiping with their beaux, whilst the dinner is burning on the stove and the cream going to waste in the dairy. Oh, it is distracting!"

Distracting it proved indeed, for before Mrs. Chartrand had been a week in the house she had almost forgotten her woes and her weeds in the fierce astonishment excited by a farther insight into the waste and mismanagement of the household. For Gene-

vieve she experienced no sentiment beyond that of contemptuous pity, and a keen regret that Paul had made so sad a mistake in his choice. That strong, bustling, active woman, brought up to housekeeping from her cradle, could not understand the sick languor, the weary discouragement to which her weak, nervous sister-in-law, was so often a prey, and more than once she inwardly accused the latter of mincing affectation.

Affairs could not go on long in this way without her disburdening her heart to some one, and one Sunday afternoon, after having declined accompanying Genevieve, under some pretext, to afternoon service, she entered the room where Paul was smoking in peaceful solitude. There was no misinterpreting the determination that sat enthroned on her brow, the portentous solemnity of her manner, and he inwardly made up his mind for a scene, but, like a wary tactician, he awaited the attack in silence.

"Paul," she suddenly burst forth, "put down your pipe and listen to me. I want to have a talk with you."

"A talk about what?" was the brief response.

"About what, you ask me! What could it be else than the woful mismanagement of your household?"

"I think that is entirely my business and Genevieve's," he drily replied, resuming the pipe he had momentarily laid down.

"That answer might do for a stranger, but it is not a just one to make to your elder and only sister, who, in speaking to you, is moved entirely by affectionate interest for yourself. Give me one fair, patient hearing, and I will not ask another. Let me now say unreservedly all that is on my mind, and then, if you wish it, I will for ever after hold my peace."

Feeling there was some truth in her words, Durand silently nodded, and she resumed:

"In our poor mother's time, though you had not more cows in your pasture than you have now, indeed less, for you have added three beautiful heifers to the stock, there were always a few firkins of sweet, well-made butter ranged in your cellar, ready for market when the price should be satisfactory; there was a goodly row of cheeses on your shelves, and baskets of eggs. How is it now? Nothing for sale at present, and there will be nothing later! In one corner of the untidy dairy, a firkin of some pale streaky substance which we must call butter, I suppose, as it would answer to no other name; a dozen of eggs, perhaps, on a cracked plate; some mouldy cream, and that is the extent of your dairy riches. Are things better in your poultry yard? Remembering the broods of thriving poul-