

His wife called him two or three times to supper before he answered :

"Yes, yes, Mary," and with a deep breath joined himself to them. He felt all the dear and delicate currents of daily life sweep him on. It was like any other supper after all. He sat, shining and soapy, at the head of the pine table. Tommy was beside him ; the baby was well asleep in the sitting-room. Their mother had brushed her hair and sat smiling. She talked about the doughnuts and the hash. He eat both with relish—he felt very hungry. Everything seemed to be going on, and would go on forever.

"Where's Sissy?" asked John suddenly, laying down a pickled cucumber that was already melting at his lips.

"Why, she's gone to the Sunday-school picnic, you know," said Sissy's mother. "She wore her pink cambric. I gave her some of that cold mutton, with the sausage and pie. I made her take the umbrella, in case it should rain. She won't get home before nine. Jenny Severby went with her."

"They've got a letter from Severby. He ain't wounded much," said John absently. He was thinking about Sissy, and to himself he said : "One less."

He was glad Sissy was at the picnic, and yet he wished, too, that she were at home ; an empty place made the table look so. He finished his pickle, and took another doughnut.

"I hain't had squshed pienough," announced Tommy at this juncture. This was a point upon which Tommy and his mother cherished differences of opinion, and a gentle domestic flurry celebrated the controversy. It was difficult even for his parents to conceive the inconceivable, so far as to believe that any boy *could* cry louder than Tommy. John ate on calmly ; he was used to it, and Mary had a way with the child. He wondered sometimes which groggery he should have selected, if he had married a scolding wife. Simp-

son's has its advantages, but Joe's was farther from home. This was the deepest metaphysical speculation in which John True had ever gone adrift. He pursued it dreamily now, as Tommy, subsiding from agony to theology, as so many wiser than Tommy had done before, struck up again :

"My omeizzen Ye-ev-ing, my
Resizzenere ;
Ven why shoulda ma-a-ma
If twyalsypere?"

"What is that boy singing?" asked his father.

"Why, its plain enough, I'm sure," said Mary, in a gently reproving tone. "He says :

'My home is in Heaven,
My rest is not here ;
Then why should I murmur
If trials appear?'

It's easy enough to understand the boy. He speaks very plain, I'm sure he does. I think he's going to have a beautiful voice when he's old enough. Let's send him to singing-school, John, shan't we?"

"I guess I'll go and get my smoke," said John. But he came back in a moment, fumbling awkwardly in his pocket, whence he drew an abject-looking cinnamon rosebud, which Tommy had freely sat on more or less during the evening meal.

"I meant to have put it in your gown before supper, Mary." John came bashfully up, and held the flower between his thumb and little finger.

His wife said : "You dear old thing!" for he did not often give her flowers. He was not one of those men. She put the rose in her bosom coquettishly, and nodded at him. A fine color flowed over her face. She felt ten years younger, and looked five. She began to sing as she washed the dishes, on a full Baptist-choir soprano, merrily joining Tommy in the statement that his home was in Heaven, till it seemed to become a general family joke, they were all in such spirits about it.