

Reuben replied, gruffly, "I've got enough to do to attend to my own business." The civil request that he might allow the use of his oxen and chains for a few moments being answered in the same surly tone, Simeon silently walked off, in search of a more obliging neighbour.

The men who were left waiting with the patient, suffering oxen, scolded about Reuben's ill nature, and said they hoped he would get stuck in the same bog himself. Their employer rejoined, "If he does, we will do our duty and help him out." "There's such a thing as being too good natured," said they. "If Reuben Black takes the notion that people are afraid of him, it makes him trample on them worse than ever."

"Oh, wait a while," replied Mr. Green, smiling. "I will kill him before long. Wait and see if I don't kill him."

It chanced, soon after, that Reuben's team did stick fast in the same bog, as the workmen had wished. Simeon noticed it from a neighbouring field, and gave directions that the oxen and chains should be immediately conveyed to his assistance. The men laughed, shook their heads, and said it was good enough for the old hornet. They, however, cheerfully proceeded to do as their employer requested them. "You are in a bad situation, neighbour," said Simeon, as he came alongside of the foundered team. "But my men are coming with two yoke of oxen, and I think we shall soon manage to help you out." "You may take your oxen back again," replied Reuben, quickly. "I don't want any of your help." In a very friendly tone, Simeon answered, "I cannot consent to do that; for evening is coming on, and you have a very little time to lose. It is a bad job at any time, but it will be still worse in the dark." "Light or dark, I don't ask your help," replied Reuben, emphatically. "I wouldn't help you out of the bog the other day when you asked me." "The trouble I had in relieving my poor oxen teaches me to sympathize with others in the same situation. Don't let us waste words about it neighbour. It is impossible for me to go home and leave you here in the bog, and night coming on."

The team was soon drawn out, and Simeon and his men went away, without waiting for thanks. When Reuben went home that night, he was unusually thoughtful. After smoking awhile in deep contemplation, he gently knocked the ashes from his pipe, and said, with a sigh, "Peg, Simeon Green has killed me!" "What do you mean," said his wife, dropping her knitting, with a look of surprise. "You know when he first came into this neighbourhood, he said he'd kill me," replied Reuben; "and he has done it. The other day he asked me to help his team out of the bog, and I told him I had enough to do to attend to my own business. To-day my team stuck fast in the same bog, and he came with two yoke of oxen to draw it out. I felt sort of ashamed to have him lend me a hand, so I told him I didn't want any of his help; but he answered, just as pleasant as if nothing contrary had ever happened, that night was coming on, and he was not willing to leave me in the mud." "He is a pleasant-spoken man, and always has a pretty word to say to the boys. His wife seems to be a nice neighbourly body, too." Reuben made no answer; but, after meditating awhile, he remarked, "Peg, you know that big ripe melon down at the bottom of the garden! you may as well carry it over there in the morning." His wife said she would, without asking him to explain where "over there" was.

But when the morning came, Reuben walked back and forth, and round and round, with that sort of aimless activity often manifested by hens and by fashionable idlers, who feel restless, and don't know what to run after. At length the cause of his uncertain movements were explained. "I guess I may as well carry the melon myself, and thank him for his oxen. In my flurry down there in the marsh, I didn't think to say that I was obliged to him."

He marched off towards the garden, and his wife stood at the door, with one hand on her hip and the other shading the sun from her eyes, to see if he would carry the melon into Simeon Green's house. It was the most remarkable incident that had ever happened since her marriage. She could hardly believe her own eyes. He walked quick, as if afraid he should not be able to carry the unusual impulse into action if he stopped to reconsider the question. When he found himself in Mr. Green's house, he felt extremely awkward, and hastened to say, "Mrs. Green, here is a melon my wife sent to you, and we reckon it's a ripe one." Without manifesting any surprise at such unexpected courtesy, the friendly matron thanked him, and invited him to sit

down. But he stood playing with the latch of the door, and, without raising his eyes, said, "May be Mr. Green ain't in this morning?"

"He is at the pump, and will be in directly," she replied; and before her words were spoken the honest man walked in, with a face as fresh and bright as a June morning. He stepped right up to Reuben, shook his hand cordially, and said, "I am glad to see you, neighbour. Take a chair; take a chair."

"Thank you, I can't stop," replied Reuben. He pushed his hat on one side, rubbed his head, looked out of the window, and then said, suddenly, as if by a desperate effort, "the fact is, Mr. Green, I didn't believe right about the oxen."

"Never mind, never mind," replied Mr. Green. "Perhaps I shall get into the bog again some of these rainy days. If I do, I shall know who to call upon."

"Why, you see," said Reuben, still very much confused, and avoiding Simeon's mild, clear eye, "you see the neighbours here are very ugly. If I had always lived by such neighbours as you are, I shouldn't be just as I am."

"Ah, well, we must try to be to other what we want them to be to us," rejoined Simeon. "You know the good book says so. I have learned by experience that if we speak kind words we hear kind echoes. If we try to make others happy, it fills them with a wish to make us happy. Perhaps you and I can bring the neighbourhood round in time. Who knows? Let us try, Mr. Black, let us try. And come and look at my orchard. I want to show you a tree which I have grafted with very choice apples. If you like, I will procure you some scions from the same stock."

Reuben Black was, if possible, still more confused; but the result of his visit was, that he afterwards confessed that Mr. Green's conduct had fairly killed him; and Reuben Black, from that day forward, became an excellent neighbour.

#### AN OLD MAN'S REMINISCENCE.

I had quarrelled with my little brother Willie, who had not quite passed his sixth year. I was two years his senior, and he was the only being I ever loved. Willie was a frail and affectionate fellow, not meant to struggle long through this dark and weary existence. The little golden locks fell upon his slender and beautiful neck, and his large blue eyes wore a soft and confiding expression, which called forth irresistibly your love and protection. I went to the corner of the garden, and continued building a house we had begun together. The evening was fast coming on, and I still required about a dozen bricks to finish it; I therefore stalked up to one which, after great trouble, he had just completed, and pulled down part of the wall for that purpose.—The little fellow could not bear it, and snatched them back from me. I, in a rage, struck him violently on the breast, and he fell to the ground.

In a short time he recovered his breath and said:

"Jamie, ted Annie to come and carry me in; I cannot walk; my breast is very, very sore."

I slunk quietly in at the back of the house. In a few moments I heard a low and mournful whisper go through the dwelling; my little Willie had broken a blood vessel. The next evening, about sunset, I went to the door of the room where he lay, and as I looked in, he beckoned me to him. The setting sun fell upon his golden hair, and as he reclined upon the snowy pillow, methought he seemed like a little angel floating on a fleecy cloud.

I crept up slowly to the side of his bed, and hid the little hand which lay upon the coverlid, within my own hand.

"Jamie," said he, "Jamie, I am going to die."

I hid my face beneath the bed clothes and sobbed aloud.

"Don't cry," said the little fellow; "you know I love you dearly; come, Jamie, let me play with your hand again, as I used to when we sat together, on the little grass plot in the warm sunshine, and don't cry, dear little brother Jamie. You will be kind to my dear little pussy, when I am gone, and fill her saucer with new milk, won't you, brother?"

Pussy lifted up her head as she heard her name, and purring, smoothed her sleek and glossy coat against the pallid face of the young sufferer, as though to thank him for the kind remembrance.

"I am going to heaven," he continued, "and that is a happy place, you know, for God, our father, whom we say our prayers to every night, lives there, and we reckon it's a happy place to see him, Jamie; and there is Jesus, whom we love so much, and who loves little children, too, so dearly—he will be there,