

THE BAG OF GOLD;

OR

WHAT SHALL HE DO WITH IT?

BY MARY SEYMOUR.

CHAPTER I.

"Raw night this, wife," said John Bolton, as he came in rubbing his hands, and seated himself by the fire in his comfortable kitchen. The odor of the corn-cake smoking on the hearth, and the large apples hissing in the ashes, came up to his nostrils, like sweet incense to a hungry soul; and there was a good deal of satisfaction twinkling in his little grey eyes as he watched his comely wife and rosy-cheeked daughter bustling around in their preparations for a good, hearty, farmer's supper.

"Well James, how goes Æsop?" said he, turning to a bright-looking boy, who sat near the fire, bending over a book. "I hear good reports of you from the schoolmaster. That's right, boy; keep on and you'll get to college yet, if you *do* have a tough pull at first."

"For my part, John," said his wife, "I don't see why you will always be talking to that boy about school. It's very little he does now but mope over his book. When I was a gal, boys were taught to work, Readin' and writin' and ciph'rin' was smart enough for us; but now-a-days folks have got this fol-de-rol about edication so in their heads, that every plough-boy thinks he must go to college. Better larn enough to keep 'em from the poor-house, before they spend their time readin' 'Sop's Fables. It's all a pack of lies, anyway, if it is Latin."

"Come, come, wife," said John, "don't be hard on the boy because he likes his book."

"Well, John Bolton, I'd like to ask if you can eat books, or if books are going to cover our backs. It's all very well, of course, for me to be working my fingers to the bones, while you are supporting other folks' children in idleness. Everybody knows I sat up nights to make that boy clothes to cover his rags, and that's all the thanks I get for it."

This storm of words was suddenly arrested by a loud knocking at the door. On opening it, a rough-looking man, all covered with the newly fallen snow, made his appearance.

After fumbling in his pockets for some time, he finally handed John a dirty slip of paper, on which were written these words:

"For God's sake, come to me, John, I am dying.

TIM MILLER."