

was about to get married and go away. Then William, the eldest son, was a farmer, and lived near at hand, but the poor man had just buried his wife, about six weeks before the opening of our story. He had six children,—Jim, the eldest, nearly fifteen, next to him was Robert and Robina, the twins, next was Nelly, next to her was Willie. We must not leave out dear little Lottie, the baby, and pet of the house. James Barton lived about two miles distant in the village of Lowry. His eldest son, Jack, was about fourteen.

Kind reader, come with me, Jack is going to grannie's to walk home with his mother. They are holding a consultation to-night to decide what is to be done.

"Well, grandma, is mother here?"

"Yes, Jack, but she is not ready yet to go home. Go into the sitting room, and talk to your uncle. He seems very low spirited to-night, thinking of his poor dear motherless children. Their cousin, Rebecca, went home the week before last, taking the baby with her. Lucy and I will be done with the tea things in a few minutes."

So whole-souled Jack joined his uncle and chatted away with him as cheerful as he could. "But, said his uncle, your pa is not home yet. Was it safe for you to leave at night? Will they not be afraid?"

"Afraid! no. Why, uncle, no drunken person or robber would come to a preachers house, or where there's an old lame aunty, they're afraid to."

"Why, Jack, do you think that she is as good as a watch dog? Oh, no, uncle, I did not mean any harm; but wait till I tell you what our girl Mary did one night when we were out to meeting. She saw some chaps prowling round as if they wanted to come in. So what do you think she did? She let up pa's study window, and the dining room too, then she drew on a pair of pa's big boots, and went about whistling the tune old hundred. But if the rascals had known it was only Molly, they would not, I guess, have gone away as quietly as they did. Why, uncle, there is pa coming; he has been to your house. Good evening. Good evening, William; I just drove up to your gate, and Norah called out that you were here, so I did not go in; are the children all well, William?"

"Yes, they are all nicely. James, I am glad that you have come, as we did not like to do anything without you."

Reader, we will now look into the neat sitting-room of the old home nest, where you will see a rather old fashioned round centre table, on which lay a few good, well preserved books. On a small mantle shelf, over the fire-place, were arranged a few china ornaments, and such like, flanked by a pair of bright brass candlesticks filled ready for use; also snuffers and trays, things almost discarded nowadays.

At what we call the head of the table sat Mrs. Barton, in black stuff dress, her serene and pleasant face surrounded by a widow's cap; on one side sat James Barton with his wife Jessie, on the other side sat poor William. Lucy and Jack had gone over to William's