

morocco portemonnaie, and slightly tossing her head, as she rose to take leave.

"The stingy creature!" ejaculated Mrs. Caxgrove, when the door was clearly closed behind her. "I don't believe any one ever knew Myrtilla Jaynesford to give a cent in charity!"

"See here, Lill," said her husband, "I only wish I had a phonographic report of your conversation for the last half hour."

"Why?"

"Because you and your friend, Mrs. Jaynesford, were tearing the rest of the world into tatters! What does the Bible say about the unruly member?"

"Nonsense!" said Mrs. Caxgrove, reddening, "Myrtilla is a great gossip, but—"

"I beg your pardon, Lill., but you were quite as bad."

"I don't believe it."

"Let's make a bargain, my dear," said Mr. Caxgrove. "I give you a tolerably good allowance for pin-money per week, don't I?"

"Yes, but what on earth has that to do with it?"

"Just this: Every time your tongue touches a neighbour's misdoings, or speaks disparagingly of any one, you shall put a ten cent note into the mite-chest."

"I would just as soon do it as not," said Mrs. Caxgrove, excitedly. "I am sure I never—"

"Is it a bargain?"

"Yes, of course. If it was Myrtilla Jaynesford, now—"

Mr. Caxgrove held out the mite-chest. Lilla bit her lip, but she dropped in the little bit of folded paper.

"Stephen, you are too bad! To take me up so!"

"But I thought it was a bargain."

Mrs. Caxgrove swept indignantly across the room. Presently she jerked the bell-wire.

"Susan," she said to the girl who answered the summons, "do take these sickening tube-roses away. Anybody might know when Mrs. Lawrence has had a ball at her house; she sends the second-hand flowers round among her friends the next day."

"Susan," said Mr. Caxgrove, philo-

sophically, "take that little paper-box to your mistress."

"Stephen!" cried Mrs. Caxgrove, "I only—"

"I know it, my dear," said her husband. "If you say so, I release you from the agreement."

"I don't want to be released," said Mrs. Caxgrove, angrily. "Accident happens to be on your side just now."

"On the side of the Home Mission, you mean," said the husband. "By the way, there's that note from Miss Dallas to be answered. Have you forgotten it?"

"What shall I say?"

"Accept her invitation, I suppose."

"O Stephen, I would so much rather go to the opera! It's always so stupid at the Dallas's, with old Mrs. Dallas telling about her coughs and colds, and Jessie always full of the last sewing circle."

"Well, I suppose it isn't very lively," said Mr. Caxgrove, with a sly smile. "Ten cents, Lill, if you please."

"Why, Stephen, what have I said! Oh, to be sure." And Mrs. Caxgrove could not help laughing. "Well, it's worth ten cents to have the privilege of speaking my mind. Any way, I shall send regrets."

"They'll be an aw ful fib, then!" said Mr. Caxgrove.

"Only a polite fiction. There, I haven't a sheet of note-paper left! Mrs. Captain Sibthorpe sent in and borrowed the last yesterday, and Mrs. Sibthorpe never returns anything she borrows by any possibility."

"Like the wicked woman in the Scripture," said the husband. "Ten cents, my love."

"It's too bad!" cried Lilla, with flaming cheeks. "I didn't mean to be taken up this way."

"I only wish Mrs. Jaynesford, or one of her set, would call again," said Mr. Caxgrove, roguishly. "There goes the bell now!"

"I shall be on my guard," said the wife. "I do believe it's Mrs. Montague, the very one of all others I most wished to see. No, it isn't neither—it's old Miss Ducey. Oh, dear! now I shall be bored for a mortal half hour."

"The Home Mission again!" said