

which seldom rested there. She was usually too tired to be interested in anything. Years of toil and "saving" had broken down her health. Where she looked out on life it was dark.

Now she bent down to look out of the window. "I wonder the Green boy ain't come," she said. Her husband came over beside her. He too scanned the dusty road with eyes that were as anxious as his wife's, if less expectant.

"It's done me good to know that John's really got through," he began, with almost boyish fervor. "It's cost a lot, but it's worth the money to have your boy a B. A."

"If he ain't got proud, with his learnin'," said the mother in a dreary tone.

"Never you fear" replied the father, "John's got sense. And we'll sell the farm by and bye, mother, and go into town. We can have hired help this year, too, I guess—now there's no schoolin' money to pay. It's good this year was the last—we're both pretty well worked out."

"Yes," came wearily from the wife's lips, and then she added with a sigh: "I guess we wouldn't have stood it much longer."

The old man leaned nearer his wife, and touched her arm with a half-caress. It was seldom he showed much affection, but this great good fortune, this realization of hopes—seemed to draw them closer together. Her dull, red-circled eyes met his timidly, yet with a light of devotion and joy. She moved her arm and leaned towards him, still looking shyly into his face.

A tap sounded on the door-panel, and they started apart. It was Green's boy and he brought a letter. The old farmer walked with feeble haste to the little table where his glasses lay. His wife set the iron on the overturned saucer that served for a stand, and stood near him. He fumbled over the letter, and bending

her weak eyes to the envelope she cried uneasily. "It don't look like John's writing, father."

"It is though," said the old man, as with flushed cheeks, his trembling fingers followed by his wife's enlarged, anxious eyes, he tore off the covering.

It was written with lead pencil. Some of the letters were ill-formed. The words did not follow the lines, and here and there the endings had gone beyond the edges. It told a sad story, and when it was finished the mother was sobbing. She had sunk into the arm-chair and pressed her calico apron to her eyes. Her husband stood with the letter still in his hand. The other rested on his wife's shoulder and was moved with her sobs. His eyes stared out into the garden. They seemed sunken in his head. There were dark shadows beneath them, and his lip twitched now and then.

Their boy had gone blind, and each was saying over with closed lips the dreadful word blind! blind! trying to realize it, to grow accustomed to its awfulness, reaching out for something to steady them in their trouble. Neither spoke. Out where the father's eyes strayed, there were flowers in bloom—pinks, snowballs, syringa and peonies. The air he breathed so spasmodically was laden with their perfume, but he did not know it. He seemed to draw in something that choked him. He saw his boy, his son over whom his old heart was so full of pride a moment ago, coming towards him—now with bandaged eyes, now with great black hollows where his eyes had been, now with white drooping lids.

It had been coming on for months, this blindness, but the boy had been brave. He struggled against it. He read only by daylight, in the dawn saving the remnant of his sight to win his degree. His eyes would be better when he could rest them, the doctor said, and he had hoped on. He