

"Yes, there is."

"What is it?" asked the Squire, with a wondering stare.

"Because," said the doctor, buttoning his coat, "you're the only one to blame for his condition. The matter with him is, that you've worked him nearly to death; he drinks to stimulate faculties which you've nearly exhausted in him, and if he dies, you'll be the person particularly to blame. Practically—although you're innocent of any such intention, of course,—practically, you'll be his murderer if he dies."

The Squire brought his fist down on the counter with a crash. "It's a lie!" he roared. "That's just the way with you book-learned fellows—the first thing you find out is, how to shove blame on somebody. Here"—for the doctor was just stepping out of the door—"come back, doctor,—I don't mean that you lie, you know I don't mean that, but I mean I'm not to blame for anything like that. I'm not to be expected to know about a fellow's bodily condition."

"You know it now," said the doctor. "My conscience is relieved, and if I hadn't been averse to meddling with the affairs of other people, I should have said all this to you long ago. Don't imagine there's any mistake about it; the boy is barely strong enough to live, even with good care. Good morning."

The fire that flashed through the good Squire's spectacles as the doctor departed, would certainly have ignited that gentleman's clothing had he remained within range of its focus. A bystander would have been frightened even to see how the Squire's gaze rested abstractedly upon a keg of sporting powder on the counter, as he relieved his mind upon the subject of the doctor's impertinence. He even declared to himself that he would never employ the doctor again, were it not that he did think it right for so old a man to trust his possibilities for good into the hands of inexperienced upstarts, like the other physicians in the village seemed to him to be. But the Squire's anger was short-lived; prudence was the leading quality of his mind, and it quickly asserted its supremacy.

"I must make up my mind to *some* thing that'll look right to the doctor," said he "an' do it quick, too, or maybe he'll go talkin' around to other folks about me, an' it'll be just like them to believe him; they all think he knows everything about the way human bein's get sick an' get well. I always thought so myself, till this mornin'. 'Sposin' he should be right—only 'sposin' it—how can I be to blame, when I didn't know anything about it? I ain't posted on natural law, and don't the Apostle say 'with

out the law sin was dead?' An' how do I know the doctor ain't mistaken, anyhow? But this ain't thinkin' what to do to keep him from talkin'."

The Squire pondered long and earnestly; he pinched up his forehead, scratched his head, rubbed his eyebrows, and beat a vigorous tattoo with his fingers on the counter, but he reached no solution of his puzzle. The Squire began to feel doleful, and then, as always happened when he inclined toward melancholy, his religious feelings began to assert themselves. He stepped into his back room, where in his capacity of secretary of the County Bible Society he kept the Society's property, and took down a Bible. He opened it at random, as was his habit when troubled in mind and in search of consolation, and his eye fell upon the following passage:

"Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity."

The Squire shut the book. "That sounds just like Peter," said he, "puttin' brotherly kindness an' charity above faith an' godliness. If he wasn't an inspired writer, I should say he was in the habit of goin' off half-cocked an' gettin' things wrong side before. I wonder how it come to open just at that place!"

The Squire allowed the Bible to open at random, and his eyes fell upon this passage:

"But thine eye and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression—"

The Squire closed the book abruptly. "That's Jeremiah," said he. "I always *did* wonder why Jeremiah was for ever down in the dumps an' abusin' the Lord's chosen people. 'Pears to me my humble efforts to seek the source of ev'ry consolation ain't much blest to-day, but I'll try again."

The book opened and the Squire read:
"And Nathan said unto David, 'Thou art the man.'"

The Squire tossed the holy book across the room with such energy that it went through a window.

"Of course Nathan said so," said he, "an' very good reason he had for sayin' it, too; but I don't see what that's got to do with me. I should think I'd been given over to the adversary to be tempted, an' that he'd just stuck his finger in the Bible at these places. But I've no business to get mad over it—'resist the devil an' he'll flee from you.' An' its wrong to treat God's holy word with such disrespect, an' I deserve the punishment I've got for it—them window-lights cost nine cents apiece by the box."

The Squire went into the yard, reverently