

was surprised by the sight of his friend running up the path to the rear door.

"Be ye sick, Jacob, or is yer house burnin' up?" he inquired from the window he was about to close.

Jacob at once fell into a walk and slouched with habitual deliberation up to the door.

"Nothin' of the kind that I *know* of," he drawled as usual. "I was atakin' of the air."

Locker left the window and unbarred the door.

"Come in and set down," he said suspiciously. "Folks don't lot no great on an . . . en o'clock at night."

"Why, ye ain't goin' to bed, be ye?" asked Jacob after he was inside. "It's the edge of the evenin'."

"I guess to play-actors it *is* the edge o' the evenin'. I've heerd some sech a yarn," admitted Locker. "But for folks in quiet walks o' life it's late. Set down."

"Wal, wal, I must be goin' along soon," and Jacob sank into a chair in the murky kitchen lighted only by the lamp in Locker's hand. "How's general?"

They discussed the price of several household commodities after Jacob had learned that the general was fair to middlin', but the talk was languid for Locker did not mean to encourage this untimely visiting and sat, lamp in hand, yawning visibly.