

From a little "lean-to" against the side of the house, used as a kitchen, an aged negress now appeared. A scarlet handkerchief formed a sort of turban above her wrinkled visage. She was tall, but bent with years, and there was a trace of weird dignity in her bearing, that was scarcely in keeping with her menial position.

"Did de young missis bring anyting?" she asked.

"Nothing, Gula," said the young girl, lightly. "The unmannerly fish laughed me to scorn. Though I tempted them above with a lily bud, and beneath with a wriggling angle-worm, not one would come home with me. They were afraid of you, Gula."

"Den dare's nothin' for supper but milk and bread," muttered the old woman.

"It will suffice for me. To-morrow I will be up with the lark, and have a dish of strawberries for breakfast." And she hummed to herself:

"I know the bank whereon they grow—  
A thing Will Shakspeare does not know."

The mother looked at her fondly, but her smile ended in a sigh. With her, almost everything in life was now ending with a sigh.

The frugal repast being ready, the father was summoned, but before he would leave his partial concealment, he asked Vera to close the window-shutters, so as to preclude the possibility of any one looking in from the outer darkness. The man seemed haunted by some vague fear which was not shared by the rest of the family, but which, in his case, was