

"I see that there is suthin' to be done about that 'ere shed," remarked gran'sir. "I will be back soon."

He went into the kitchen, prepared a stiff mug of flip, and drank it down eagerly.

"O Cephas!" moaned grandmother.

"Now, wife, why do you say anything? I have a hard job before me."

She wiped her tears in reply. She knew that gran'sir already had had more mugs of flip than he could carry off.

"You're cryin'!"

"Yes; you can't handle yourself out there."

"Can't I handle myself? You'll see, you'll see, madam! I think I can!"

It was a foolish boast.

He strutted across the yard, but unsteadily, and went into a shed to get a joist with which to prop up the shed on the outside. He carried it outside. The Smith lot went down to the river. Here a wharf had been built, and the shed and hen-house were on this wharf, the rear wall of each coming to the wharf's edge.

Gran'sir went to the edge of the wharf to see where he could best set up his prop. He was feeling the liquor he had drunk. He made a careless movement, and down he tumbled, and over the edge of the wharf he went!

"Help! help!" rang out his voice.

Peter was on hand, small boy though he was. Somebody else was on hand—Grandmother Smith. She came fluttering out of the house, and then ran to the wharf. In her hand she carried her old red shawl. The faded fabric was homely now, but it was strong. Holding on to her end firmly, she flung out the other end to Gran'sir Smith.

"Ketch it, ketch it!" she shrieked.

Gran'sir Smith grabbed it.

"Now, Peter, help your grandma! Pull in! All together—now!"

Grandmother Smith showed herself an expert. Peter did his share. They pulled together. They pulled Gran'sir to the wharf. They pulled him over the edge of the wharf. How they did it, they could not say. Then they led him into the house. He was put

into dry clothes. He was placed before the kitchen fire.

He looked so comfortable there before the cheerfully purring fire. He wore a blue dressing-gown that Grandmother Smith had made for him, and it contrasted finely with his long white hair that the same faithful wife had brushed back from his forehead.

Now and then he looked up at the old flip-mug on the mantel over the stove, glancing down at his blue dressing-gown. He looked very solemn.

"What are you thinkin' of, Cephas?"

"I was thinkin' if I had looked this way, all slikt up so neat, if I had gone down to the bottom of the river."

"Oh!—O husband, don't speak of it!"

"But I must, wife; if—if if it hadn't been for you and Peter, I should have been down at the bottom of the river, sartin. I know why I fell over."

Here he gave a savage glance at the mug.

"Is that shed a-standin'?"

"Yes, and I believe it won't go after all."

"Well, that hen-coop, hen-house—won't that go?"

"No, it 's standing, and I don't believe it will go."

Gran'sir rose in his chair.

"Suthin' has got to go!" he said energetically, "and it shall be that mug! Peter!"

"What, sir?"

"Take my mug and a piece of board, and put the mug on the board, and then put the board on the edge of the wharf, and then—then"—here Gran'sir's voice became almost terrific—"then launch her! That thing has got to go! Not goin' to have this tide for nothin'!"

The mug went. The tide swept about the board, drifted it away, and quickly smothered it.

Its fate was watched from the kitchen window, and then gran'sir said:

"Now, wife, pray for me! Where's Peter? Oh, here he is! Peter, pray too! I want my appetite to be sunk way down—way down—same as that mug. God help me!"

Such a time of prayer!