

'Ah! what was the cause?'

'Oh! you'll hardly believe it. But Eddy Jones stole a dollar from Maggy Enfield!'

'Stole a dollar!' ejaculated Mr. Levering. His voice was husky, and he felt a cold thrill passing along every nerve.

'Yes, pa! he stole a dollar! Oh, wasn't it dreadful?'

'Perhaps he was wrongly accused,' suggested Mrs. Levering.

'Emma Wilson saw him do it, and they found the dollar in his pocket. Oh! he looked so pale, and it made me almost sick to hear him cry as if his heart would break.'

'What did they do with him?' asked Mrs. Levering.

'They sent for his mother, and she took him home.'

'Wasn't it dreadful?'

'It must have been dreadful for his poor mother,' Mr. Levering ventured to remark.

'But more dreadful for him,' said Mrs. Levering. 'Will he ever forget his crime and disgrace? Will the pressure of that dollar on his conscience ever be removed? He may never do so wicked an act again; but the memory of this wrong deed cannot be wholly effaced from his mind.'

How rebukingly fell all these words on the ears of Mr. Levering! Ah! what would he not then have given to have the weight of that dollar removed? Its pressure was so great as almost to suffocate him. It was all in vain that he tried to be cheerful, or take an interest in what was passing immediately around him. The innocent prattle of his children had lost its wonted charm, and there seemed an accusing expression in the concern his changed aspect had occasioned, she looked soberly upon him. Unable to bear all this, Mr. Levering went out, something unusual for him, and walked the streets for an hour. On his return, the children were in bed, and he had gained sufficient self-control to meet his wife with a less disturbed appearance.

On the next morning, Mr. Levering felt something better. Sleep had left his mind more tranquil. Still there was a pressure on his feelings, which thought could trace to that unlucky dollar. About an hour after going to his store, Mr. Levering saw his customer of the day previous enter, and move along towards the place where he stood behind his counter. His heart gave a sudden bound, and the color rose to his face. An accusing conscience was quick to conclude as to the object of her visit. But he soon saw that no suspicion of wrong dealing was in the lady's mind. With a pleasant half recognition, she asked to look at certain articles, from which she made purchases, and in paying for them, placed a ten dollar bill in the hand of the storekeeper.

'That weight shall be off my conscience,' said Mr. Levering to himself, as he began counting out the change due to his customer; and, purposely, he gave her one dollar more than was justly hers in that transaction. The lady glanced her eyes over the money, and seemed slightly bewildered. Then, much to the storekeeper's relief, opened her purse and dropped it therein.

'All right again!' was the mental ejaculation of Mr. Levering, as he saw the purse disappear in the lady's pocket, while his breast expanded with a sense of relief.

The customer turned from the counter, and had nearly gained the door, when she paused, drew out her purse, and emptying the contents of one end into her hand, carefully noted the amount. Then walking back, she said with a thoughtful air—

'I think you've made a mistake in the change, Mr. Levering.'

'I presume not, ma'am. I gave you four and thirty-five,' was the quick reply.

'Four, thirty-five,' said the lady, musingly. 'Yes, here it is just four, thirty-five.'

'That's right; yes, that's right,' Mr. Levering spoke, somewhat nervously.

'The article came to six dollars and sixty-five cents, I believe?'

'Yes, yes; that was it!'

'Then three dollars and thirty-five cents will be my right change,' said the lady, placing a small gold coin on the counter. 'You gave me too much.'