

enough; but it 'pears to me such a slender little midget as you couldn't airn your salt. What d'ye say your name was?"

"Mary Smith. And, indeed, if you will try me for only a week, I'm sure you will keep me till the season is over."

Mrs. Clement looked out of the window at the gray clouds that were piling gloomily up; and then the wind gave a great wailing shriek around the corners of the house.

"You can't cook, ken you? or shake up feather beds—big ones, forty pounders?"

A gleeful little laugh came from Mary's lips.

"Indeed I can. I may not cook to suit you, but I can learn."

Mrs. Clement walked to the huge open fire-place in the kitchen where the Deacon was shelling corn.

"What d'ye say, Deacon? Keep her or not? I kind o' like her looks, and the dear knows it 'ud be a good lift while we're killin', if she couldn't do more'n set the table or make the mush for the bread."

"Take her, of course, Hanner. You're hard driv'n, I know. Let her stop a week or so anyhow."

So Mrs. Clement came slowly back and sat down again.

"You can't get away to-night, anyhow. There's a snow-storm been brewin' these three days, and it's onto us now, sure enough. See them 'ere flakes, fine and thick. That's a sure sign it'll last a good while. You may as well take your things upstairs to the west garret and come down and help get supper."

Then followed directions to the "west garret," and when she was gone, Mrs. Clement turned to the Deacon and said:

"I never saw a girl afore I'd trust up stairs alone. But such as her don't steal; I ken tell you that, if nothing else."

Directly she came down in her neat purple print dress and big white apron; her hair brushed off her face into a net; a narrow linen collar, fastened with a sailor's loop of narrow black ribbon.

It seemed as if she had life, so handily she fitted in and out the big pantry into the buttery, and then down the cellar.

Then after the meal, she gathered up the dishes in a neat, silent way, that was perfect bliss to Mrs. Clement's eyes.

"She's determined to airn her bread, anyhow, and I like her turn, too."

And the Deacon knew his wife had "taken a shine" to Mary Smith.

One by one the days wore on; the "hog killing" was over and done; long strings of sausages hung in fantastic rings, arranged by Mary's deft fingers; sweet hams and shoulders were piled away in true housewifely order, and now Mary and Mrs. Clement were sitting in the great, sunny dining-room, darning and mending.

"I don't know whatever I am going to do without you, Mary. I dread to see you pack up your clothes."

A blush of pleasure spread over the girl's face.

"I am so glad you have been suited with my work. Indeed, I've tried hard to please you."

"It ain't the work altogether, though, goodness knows, your'e the smartest gal I've seen this many a day. As I said, it ain't the work—it's you, Mary. I've got to thinking a sight of you—me and the Deacon."

Mary's lips trembled at the kindness in the old lady's voice, but she sewed rapidly on.

"It's been uncommon lonesome-like since the boy left the farm; but its