

to me kinder shaky and trimblin' like. And when I came in, I see Roxy's face a sort of red and white in spots, and her eyes lookin' down and to one sides, and anywheres but straight,—kinder wander'n roun' onsartain, like's ef she wus afeard you'd look into 'em and see sumpin you hadn't orter."

"Well, I *do* declare!" Whenever Mrs. Hanks found herself entirely at a loss for words and ideas she proceeded after this formula to *declare*. She always declared that she did declare, but never declared what she declared.

"Well, I *do* declare!" she proceeded after a pause. "Jemimy Dumbleton, if that don't beat the Dutch! for you to go prying into people's houses, and peeping into their eyes and guessing their secrets, and then to run around tattling them all over town to everybody, and——"

But the rest of this homily will never be known, for at this critical moment the lad with the ambitious name, who was engaged in developing his military genius by firing carpet-rag cannon-balls in various directions and watching their rebound, made a shot which closed the squabble between Mrs. Hanks and her help. He bowled a bright red ball—relic of an old flannel shirt—through the middle of a screen which covered the fire-place in the summer. When he heard the crashing of the ball through the paper he set up a shout of triumph, clapping his hands together, but when he saw that his missile did not come back from its hiding-place, he stood looking in stupefied curiosity at the screen, the paper of which had almost closed over the rent. He was quite unable to account for the sudden and total eclipse of his red ball.

Mrs. Hanks saw with terror the screen, which had cost the unskilled hands of herself and Jemima two or three hours of cutting and planning and pasting, destroyed at a blow. Mischief done by responsible hands has this compensation, that one has the great relief of scolding, but one would as well scold the wind as to rebuke so irresponsible an agent as Bobo. Mrs. Hanks seized him by the collar and shook him, then ran to the screen and put her hands behind it, holding the pieces in place as one is prone to do in such a case. It is the vague, instinctive expression of the wish that by some magic the injury might be recalled. Then she looked at her late antagonist, Jemima, for sympathy, and then she looked at the rent and uttered that unspellable interjection made by resting the tongue against the roof of the mouth and suddenly withdrawing it explosively. One writes it "tut—tut—tut," but that is not it at all.

Bobo fretted a little, as he generally did after being shaken up in this way, but having recovered his red ball, he was on the point of dashing it through the screen again, when his mother prudently took it away from him, put on his cap, led him to the door and said:

"Go to Roxy."

"Go to Roxy!" cried the little fellow, starting down the path, repeating the words over and over to himself as he went, as though he found it needful to revive instantly his feeble memory of its destination.

Having thus comfortably shed her maternal responsibilities, Mrs. Hanks proceeded to shed the carpet-rags also, by arraying herself to go out. This was a very simple matter, even for the wife of one of the principal men in the town, for in those good old days of simplicity nothing more elaborate than a calico dress and sun-bonnet was needed