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ESPERANCE DEPARTMENT.

THE KEMP GATHERER.

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One night in particular, towards the end of the second month, appeared to linger so very strangely that the widow thought the morning would never dawn. An unusual darkness seemed to brood over the world; and she lay awake, gazing with longing eyes toward the little window through which the sun's earliest rays were used to greet her in her waking.

On a sudden, she heard voices outside the window. Alive to the least circumstance that was unusual, she arose, all dark as it was, threw on her simple dress in haste, and groped her way to the front of the dwelling. She recognised the voice of a friendly neighbour, and opened the door, supposing that he might have some interesting intelligence to communicate. She judged correctly.

"Good news, good news, Mrs Reardon; and I give you joy of them this morning. What will you give me for telling you who is in that small boat at the shore?"

"That small boat!—what?—where?"

"Below there, ma'am, where I'm pointin my finger. Don't you see them coming up the crag towards you?"

"I cannot—I cannot—it is so dark—" the widow replied, endeavouring to penetrate the gloom.

"Dark! And the broad sun shining down upon them this whole day!"

"Day! The Sun! O my almighty Father, save me!"

"What's the matter? Don't you see them ma'am?"

"See them? the poor woman exclaimed, laying her hands on her eyes and shrieking

aloud in her agony—"Oh! I shall never see him more!—I am dark and blind!"

The peasant started back and blessed himself. The next instant the poor widow was caught in the arms of her son.

"Where is she? My mother! O my darling mother, I am come to you! Look, I have kept my word.

She strove, with a sudden effort of restraint, to keep her misfortune secret, and wept without speaking, upon the neck of her long absent relative, who attributed her tears to an excess of happiness. But when he presented his young wife, and called her attention to the happy laughing faces and healthful cheeks of their children, the wandering of her eyes and the confusion of her manner left it no longer possible to retain the secret.

"My good, kind boy, said she, laying her hand on his arm—"you are returned to my arms once more, and I am grateful for it—but we cannot expect to have all we wish for in this world. O my poor boy, I can never see you—I can never see your children! I am blind.

The young man uttered a horrid & piercing cry, while he tossed his clenched hand above his head and stamped upon the earth in sudden anguish. "Blind! my mother?" he repeated—"O, heaven, is this the end of all my toils and wishes? To come home and find her dark for ever! Is it for this I have prayed and laboured? Blind and dark! O my poor mother! Oh, heaven! O mother, mother."

"Hold, now, my boy—where are you? What way is that for a Christian to talk? Come near me, and let me touch your hands.—Don't add to my sorrows. Richard, my child, by uttering a word against the will of Heaven.—Where are you? Come near me,