

the young Squire had furnished it. He was there himself, asleep by the fire. Seeing that he really was asleep, and took no manner of notice, she was emboldened to look round the room. From looking about the room to stepping inside out of the rain was but a natural sequence of events. But it was not in the natural order of things that, while her eyes watched the face of the sleeper, her right hand, while the accomplice left held up the apron, should steal forth and convey the loaf beneath that feminine robe proper for concealment. When she was gone, Alan's breakfast-table was as bare as Dame Hubbard's cupboard.

The morning advanced. All the men had long since gone off to their work ; but now the women, whose household duties were by this time pretty well accomplished for the day, came out and began to gossip at the doors. And then the rumour ran from house to house that the Squire was in his cottage, that the cottage door was open, and the Squire was sound asleep inside, for all the world to see.

When Alan awoke, which was about half-past eight, he sat up in his chair and rubbed his eyes. Before him, gathered together at the open door of his cottage, were the whole feminine population, with all the children who could not yet walk. There was the ancient gammer, her face seamed and lined, and her shoulders bent. There was the strong and sturdy housewife, mother of many, one of whom she was brandishing.

There was the newly-married wife, fresh from the wash-tub, the suds yet lying on her red arms. There was the maiden of blushing sixteen, carrying her infant brother. All were there ; all were staring with open mouths and eyes, whispering, tittering, and waiting.

When he sat up they started back ; when he opened his eyes they fled multivious ; so that all he got was a mere sense, or dim half-photograph, of the scene which might even have been a dream. But he heard the rustle of flying skirts and the skurry of retreating feet, and he divined what had happened.

But they ought not to have taken away his loaf, and his pork, and his sugar. That was carrying curiosity beyond its legitimate limits. And the fire was out, and the water had boiled away, and there was a great hole burnt in the bottom of the kettle. He looked round him in dismay. Up to the present he had succeeded in nothing but in making himself ridiculous.

Why is it, he asked, that a man will cheerfully bear insult, contempt, and misrepresentation, and yet fall into unphilosophic rages when he incurs ridicule ? It was a question to which no answer came.

Meantime, what was he to do ?

It was nine o'clock. He was hungry. He would consider this a day lost, and he would go over to Dalmeny Hall and ask for breakfast.

(To be continued.)

HOME.

HOME! in that word how many hopes are hidden,
How many hours of joy serene and fair,
How many golden visions rise unbidden,
And blend their hues into a rainbow *there*.

Round home what images of beauty cluster,—
Links which unite the living with the dead,
Glimpses of scenes of most surpassing lustre,
Echoes of melody whose voice is fled.

Home is the place where we have ever blended
Our hopes and happiness, our tears and sighs,
Whence our united worship hath ascended,
As grateful incense to the listening skies.