

without waiting to see what his memory's going to do for him. "No," added Uncle Bill, in a louder tone, "there's no business at all in him, and he can go back to his mother for all I care, and pick up a living how and where he likes."

"Keep cool, Bill," said Aunt Sarah, "keep cool," and she gave an appealing glance at little Bill, which said plainly, "Ask his pardon and make peace."

They called it the Johnson temper—and a very disagreeable temper it was. Big Bill Johnson rather prided himself on it, and was heard to boast that he never gave in first—not he. "I leave that to the other party."

Little Bill Johnson had a large share of the Johnson temper, too, with a strong dash of the uncle's stubbornness thrown in. He shut his heart to Aunt Sarah's appealing glance, and put his hand on his cap.

"I'm going off to mother now. It's like as not I'll get something for a living somewhere else." He said it slowly and distinctly, but the passion in his face was not one whit abated, and his hands trembled from rage.

"Go!" thundered his uncle, pointing to the door, "and never let me see your face in this coffee tavern again!"

"Bill! Bill!" cried Aunt Sarah, making a dash at the door; but her husband held her back.

"Keep cool, Sarah," he said, throwing her own words back at her. "Keep cool." But he looked very far from cool himself, as he watched his nephew running down the street, wondering which would be the one to give in first after this double display of Johnson temper. "Not me,"

he muttered with what he meant to be a chuckle, but which was really more like a growl. "Not me! And him and me's as like as two peas!"

A customer came in to be served just then, and poor Aunt Sarah had to hide her anxieties behind a smiling face, and Johnson slipped into the little back parlour to recover himself.

Little Bill was big Bill's brother's child. Jack Johnson had died more than a year ago, leaving his widow with two children and very poor prospects. She eked out a narrow living with her needle, and often found it hard work to make both ends meet.

About three months before our story opens, Bill Johnson came to see her with a purpose. "Jane," he said, "what d'you say of my taking your Bill altogether? Me and Sarah's set our heart upon it."

"Taking Bill altogether?" faltered the widow.

"He's nig. on twelve, ain't he?" said big Bill. "You see," he went on, scratching his head, "he's a regular Johnson all over; and he minds me of Jack when he was a little chap; and we've got no children of our own. I'd put him to school on my own account for another year, and between whiles he could clean out the shop of mornings, and run errands, and make himself useful; and after that I could have him home, and learn him the business, and see how we'd get along. You would have one mouth less to feed."

To be Continued.

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