

Without one word, William shouldered his spade and walked to the house. His mother, who stood at the corner window, although she had heard no word spoken, understood the whole affair perfectly. She saw William shoulder the spade, and then her heart beat heavily, but quickly raising the corner of her apron, she wiped the tears which were fast falling, and met her son with a smile.

"Well, mother, I've done," said he as he sunk on the old kitchen chair, "I've done trying to be anything here. He won't let me be anybody."

"My child, don't speak so disrespectfully of your father. He, Willie, that sounds dreadfully; never say that again my son."

"I can't help it, mother, I shan't stay here. You know what I told you last week, mother, and to-day I have had something come across my feelings, harder to bear than all. When I was coming from the village, I met a man with a double waggon, and a beautiful larch tree in it. I was hoping to buy it, so I asked him where he got it, 'Squire Gove gave it to me,' he replied. O, mother, wasn't that too much? I asked him who took it up, and he said his Irishman that he called Mike. I could have torn that tree in splinters, mother. I rode round by the grove, and sure enough 'twas gone and the mossy seat all trampled and torn. Do you think after that I would ask him to let me set out the trees? No, mother, if father can do without me I can do without him.—I shall go away as soon as you can get my things ready. Of course the folks will say—'What an ungrateful boy to leave his father alone,' but why can't father try to please me as well as others—as well as strangers? There are the Norton boys—if father had done one-quarter for me that their father has done for them, I should be very, very happy. O, mother don't feel so bad—you must not blame me. I know you are a real Christian, mother, but I ain't like you—you overlook and forgive everything. I'm some like father; I wish I was just like you."

William expected his mother would entreat him to stop at home, but no, not one word did she say in favor of it. She knew these were little things to cause the boy to leave the home of his youth for a home among strangers, but she knew also that the joys and griefs at home are almost all made up of little, very little things.

We will hasten over the particulars of William's leaving home, and only say that his father's parting words were, "I can do without you as long as you can do without me, William." In four weeks from this leave-taking, William was a waiter on board a Mississippi steamboat.

Mr. Gove hired an extra hand—many people shook their heads meaningly, and said it was a pity, a great pity, but nothing new or strange, for an only child to be spoiled by indulgence; but then he was a pretty, bright boy, and they supposed it came hard to punish him, but "spare the rod and spoil the child," was scripture.

The summer was passed, the golden grain was garnered, and the rich fruits secured, when Mr. Gove, who had grown somewhat moody of late, called Mike to the back door, and giving him

some directions, took his hat, and passing out the other door, joined him.

"Let me see, you have the spade and hoe. Well, now, come down with me to the side of the hill where the early corn was planted, and do you remember where the holes were, that William made last spring?"

"And sure 'tis not me that's a-fther forgetting sich things, for didn't I put a flat stone by every hite of 'em; and didn't I in hoeing and harvest keep them from being shoved a bit? For do you mind, sir, I set a dale by the boy—he wouldn't hurt a baste, sir, and his heart is as big as a whale."

"Well, well, that's enough, Mike. Now you bring all the trees you buried in the swamp, and set them out just as you did Norton's, and do you know which were the trees designed for the holes William had opened?"

"And fath I mind it well, for didn't I tie a string round 'em, jes so."

Mr. G. took the arm-chair, and moving it to the bed-room window, seemed lost in thought. Surely, he must be sick, for he was never known to sit down of a week day except at meal times.

Two hours passed and Mike was passing the window, when he was thus accosted by Mr. G.: "Have you done, Mike?"

"Sure, sir, a plesant job to me, I was lazy to quat it."

"Now take your spade and prepare a place by this window, where you see I've placed the stick, for a larger tree. Now if you have it right go over to Capt. Burns' and ask him if he will sell me that larch tree in the west corner of his birch lot. Tell him the price is no object, and be careful you don't break any of the small roots; be careful, Mike."

"No fear o' that, sir."

"Stop, that is not all. When you come home, call at Smith's, and tell him I have concluded to come over this afternoon and Squire Norton will be here to fix the writings.—Tell all who enquire for me that I am sick."

Before night one-third of Mr. Gove's land was in Mr. Smith's possession, and the deed on record. The larch seemed quite at home by the bed-room window.

And now what strange spell was this upon Mr. Gove.

"O, there are moments in our life
When but a thought, a word a look has power,
To wrest the cup of happiness aside
And stamp us wretched!"

The evening before, Mr. G. chanced to take up a school-book of William's, and on a blank leaf were written in a neat school-boy hand, these simple lines:

"'Tis the last blooming summer these eyes shall behold
Long, long, e'er another, this heart shall be cold;
For O, its warm feelings on earth have been chilled,
And I grieve not that shortly its pulse will be stilled."

Mr. G. dropped the book, and wandered he hardly knew wither, till he found himself in the swamp where William's trees were buried. What followed the reader already knows.

Mrs. G. had finished her day's work, and was seating herself in the little rocking chair, when Mr. G. called to her from the bed-room