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want to come back. Likely as not they're better suited with the city than they were with the country, and wouldn't come back for anything."

"Maybe so," she assented doubtfully. "But you will be seeing them pretty soon, and can find out all about it."

It was two weeks later when Miles went to the city. He met Nathan Caswell on the street, not far from his son Ed's house. His white hair and beard, his bent figure, and an air of depression, made him look pathetically old for a man but little over sixty.

Miles barred his way. "Don't you recognize your old neighbors, Uncle Nathan?" he asked, smilingly.

It was wonderful how the bent figure straightened and the dull face lighted up. "Well, well, well!" he exclaimed, shaking hands as if he never would stop. "I don't know when I was ever gladder to see anybody than I be to see you, Miles Torrey."

He urged Miles to go back with him to the house. "Fannie's washing up the floors, and has got most of the windows up, airing out the rooms she's a pretty partic'lar housekeeper. Fannie is—but I reckon we can find a place somewhere to sit down."

"Of course I'm coming," Miles answered. "I don't want to miss seeing Aunt Mary."

"Oh, she ain't here," Uncle Nathan told him. "She lives to Gib's. I was jest starting over there to see her."

"Then I'll walk along with you," Miles said. "You don't mean to say, though, that you don't live together?" he asked incredulously.

"It ain't be'n so we could, yet," said Uncle Nathan. "You see, the folks in the city have to crowd up pretty close, and so I kinder fit in with the odd boy at Ed's, and Mother with the extra girl at Gib's."

"Humph!" said Miles bluntly. "I shouldn't think that was a very satisfactory arrangement. Why doesn't one of them hire a large tenement?"

"They do think mebbe they may, in the spring; but a bigger house would come consider'ble higher, and it costs a sight to move. Of course our being here is a good deal of expense to 'em, anyway," he added.

"Do you get to see each other often?" Miles asked.

"I walk out there every day, 'cept in real bad weather, then I stay to home, just to humor Mother, she's so afeared I'll get sick or suthin'. She ain't never got over the idee that I don't know how to take care of myself," he explained, with an indulgent laugh.

"She doesn't come to see you, then?"

"Oh, shes be'n a few times, but 'tis 'most too far for her to walk, and on the electrics it's a roundabout way, so's I'm scairt to death a-thinking she'll lose her way or get run over. She kinder hates to call on them for the money, too—though I wouldn't have you think they've ever begredegged it to her. They're real good to us, the boys are, and their wives, too."

* * * * *

"Well, are they contented there?" Mrs. Torrey asked Miles that evening as soon as he reached home.

"Contented!" he exclaimed. "Contented!" he repeated. "Why, Mother, I don't think you could scare up a more thoroughly homesick pair if you searched for a year. They're plucky though—not a word of complaint from either of them. But I sized up the situation: Uncle Nathan, who was always such a worker, has nothing at all to occupy him, and is as uneasy as a fish out of water; while Aunt Mary, the soul of order, is wearing herself out trying to keep things tidy in her easy-going daughter-in-law's house. They miss the old home, they miss their independence, and they miss each other."

"Did they say anything about coming back?" Mrs. Torrey asked.

"Uncle Nathan did after we left Aunt Mary's. They want to come and camp out in their barn next summer, he to work for the neighbors. I guess the boys don't think much of

it, by the way he brightened up when I said 'twas a good scheme and we'd lend 'em the furniture for it. I made up my mind then and there that they must have this house. We'll give 'em the biggest kind of a surprise."

"I'm glad you said what you did about their camping out," said his mother. "It would have been cruel not to have let them have anything to look forward to."

"That's the way I felt. I stopped to see Hale on the way home. At first he said positively he wouldn't touch it till spring; but when he found 'twas for the Caswells, he said he'd watch his chances and move it this winter. It seems Uncle Nathan did him a kindness once, and he's never forgotten it."

"We can store our things and go to board with Susan Witherell," said Mrs. Torrey, energetically. "Twill be a real help to her, and will give me time to spend fixing up the house inside after it's moved."

The winter was long to the Caswells. "If it wa'n't for Miles Torrey coming to see us and tell us the news now and then, I don't see how we could endure it to wait till summer." Aunt Mary said once, in an unusual burst of feeling.

"And summer is only a 'perhaps,'" Uncle Nathan returned dejectedly. "Ed and Gib seem to think it so foolish, our wanting to go back, and Fannie and Sophie are so afeared we couldn't stand it to rough it! Land o' Goshen, who cares if 'tis! And I could stand it to live in a barrel, like an old settin'-hen, 'f the barrel was on the old farm."

"I'd be glad to do it," Aunt Mary responded, laughing a little at the idea.

"Seems 'sif 'twould be too good to be true for us ever to go back there, even for a day," Uncle Nathan said, with homesick longing.

But in March came Miles Torrey with an invitation: "Mother wants you both to come out and stay over Easter Sunday; the new chapel is going to be dedicated then. And I am going to take you there in my new automobile."

The journey was interrupted halfway by the rain, and Miles and his guests had to spend the rest of the afternoon at a hotel. At nine in the evening, however, the rain had entirely ceased, and they started once more. The air was warm, but there was a great deal of water standing in the road, and that and a dense fog made it necessary to proceed at a snail's pace.

Aunt Mary's and Uncle Nathan's cheerfulness was unimpaired, but Miles was disappointed and disgusted. This was all so different from what he had planned. The afternoon was with rousing reception and a big supper at the end of it. He had imagined exactly how Uncle Nathan and Aunt Mary would look when the old-new house burst upon their astonished vision. Now he would have to tell them about it, and it would be all so very flat and tame.

Then suddenly the fog suggested an idea. He would still let them think they were going to visit his mother, and let the situation reveal itself as it would. He could not be a witness to the surprise, but wouldn't it be tremendous! He laughed as he thought of it, and began to talk very fast to divert Aunt Mary and Uncle Nathan and keep them from thinking too much where they were going. He even went by a little different route from usual to throw them more entirely off their guard.

"Here we are, at last," said Miles, bringing the automobile to a stop. "And it is as I feared; everybody is abed."

"Don't wake her up!" they both besought him earnestly. "You jest show us to our room, and we won't make a bit more noise than we can help."

"Perhaps I'd better do that way," said Miles, with a show of reluctance. "Mother would like it, of course, but she's such a shy sleeper—she probably wouldn't go to sleep again all