

Draxy handed him the paper. He laughed scornfully as soon as he looked at it. "Taint worth the paper it's writ on," said he, "and he knew it; if he hain't looked the land up all these years, of course, 'twas sold at vendue long ago."

Draxy turned hastily away. Up to this moment she had clung to a little hope.

When the family were all gathered together in the evening, and Draxy had told the story of her adventures, Reuben and Capt. Melville examined the deed together. It was apparently a good clear title; it was of three hundred acres of land. Reuben groaned, "Oh, how I should like to see land by the acre once more." Draxy's face turned scarlet, and she locked and unlocked her hands, but said nothing. "But it's no use thinking about it," he went on; "this paper isn't worth a straw. More likely there's more than one man well under way on the land by this time."

They looked the place up on an atlas. It was in the extreme north-east corner of New Hampshire. A large part of the county was still marked "ungranted," and the township in which this land lay was bounded on the north by this uninhabited district. The name of the town was Clairvend.

"What could it have been named for?" said Draxy. "How pleasantly it sounds."

"Most likely some Frenchman," said Captain Melville. "They always give names that 're kind o' musical."

"We might as well burn the deed up. It's nothing but a torment to think of it a lyin' round with its three hundred acres of land," said Reuben, in an impulsive tone, very rare for him, and prolonged the "three hundred" with a scornful emphasis; and he sprang up to throw the paper into the fire.

"No, no, man," said Captain Melville; "don't be so hasty. No need of burning things up in such a roomy house's 'his! Something may come of that deed yet. Give it to Draxy; I'm sure she's earned it, if there's anything to it. Put it away for your dowry, dear," and he snatched the paper from Reuben's hands and tossed it into Draxy's lap. He did not believe what he said, and the attempt at a joke brought but a faint smile to any face. The paper fell on the floor, and Draxy let it lie there till she thought her father was looking another way, when she picked it up and put it in her pocket.

For several days there were unusual silence and depression in the household. They had really set far more hope than they knew on this venture. It was not easy to take up the old routine and forget the air castle. Draxy's friend, Mrs. White, was almost as disappointed as Draxy herself. She had not thought of the