

"My Elder," said Draxy to herself as she went upstairs, "he's everybody's Elder—and the Lord's most of all I think," and she went to sleep thinking of the solemn words which she had heard him speak on the last Sunday.

It was strange how soon the life of the new household adjusted itself; how full the days were, and how swift. The summer was close upon them; Reuben's old farmer instincts and habits revived in full force. Bill Sims proved a most efficient helper; he had been Draxy's sworn knight, from the moment of her first interview with him. There would be work on Reuben's farm for many hands, but Reuben was in no haste. The sugar camp assured him of an income which was wealth to their simple needs; and he wished to act advisedly and cautiously in undertaking new enterprises. All the land was wild—much of it deep swamps. The maple orchard was the only part immediately profitable. The village people came at once to see them. Everybody was touched by Jane's worn face and gentle ways; her silence did not repel them; everybody liked Draxy too, and admired her, but many were a little afraid of her. The village men had said that she was "the smartest woman that had ever set foot in Clairvend village," and human nature is human nature. It would take a great deal of Draxy's kindly good-will to make her sister women forgive her for being cleverer than they. Draxy and Reuben were inseparable. They drove; they walked; even into the swamps courageous Draxy penetrated with her father and Bill Sims, as they went about surveying the land; and it was Draxy's keen instinct which in many cases suggested where improvement could be made.

In the meantime Elder Kinney's existence had been transformed. Day after day he spent more and more time in the company of Draxy and her father. Reuben's gentle, trustful nature found repose in the Elder's firm, sturdy downrightness, much as it had in Captain Melville's; and the Elder would have loved Reuben if he had not been Draxy's father. But to Draxy he seemed to draw no nearer. She was the same frank, affectionate, merry, puzzling woman-child that she had been at first; yet as he saw more and more how much she knew of books which he did not know, of people, and of affairs of which he had never heard—how fluently, graciously, and even wisely, she could talk, he felt himself cut off from her. Her sweet, low tones and distinct articulation tortured him while they fascinated him; they seemed to set her apart.

He exaggerated all his own defects of manner, and speech, and education; he felt uncomfortable in Draxy's presence, in spite of all the affectionate reverence with which she treated him; he said to himself fifty times a day, "It's only my bein' a minister that makes her think anythin' o' me." The Elder was fast growing wretched.

But Draxy was happy. She was still in some way more child than woman. Her peculiar training had left her imagination singularly free from fancies concerning love and marriage. The