

garment could bring its rags much below her knees, nor keep in proper place over her shoulders when she bent to her work. This every-day clothing was very unlike the silk drapery she had once seen a missionary lady assume at a meeting. "The rags are bad enough, but the dirt is worse; and as for the scantiness it is unbearable," said Mrs. Workwell in deep disgust.

The necessity to work seemed laid upon her. "But then I always worked," she said bravely. The sun grew hot; it beat upon her bare head until it ached; the heated earth scorched her naked feet, and the hours seemed interminable. At noon her ten-year-old Mamie brought her, in a coarse, brown, earthen jar, some cold porridge mixed with water. "I could not touch that stuff if I were not just faint with hunger," she said, as it was she drank it greedily. The afternoon wore on more slowly as the heat increased. The lack of a substantial dinner increased her weariness. "What would Robert say if he knew? When, oh when can I go home and rest?"

When the sun was low her companions, with rude laughter and chatter, twisted up their unkempt hair into a knot, and shouldered their last basket, and she started for home with them. "Home!" "What filthy pool is this before the door? And where are the neat, painted steps she prided herself on keeping so clean? Where the pretty house with the pansy-beds and the rose-bush by the window? Was this black mud together with the ragged straw roof henceforth to be her HOME. Sic it entered. Her dainty parlor, her cosy sitting-room, her elegant bed-room, dining-room, kitchen and pantry were all comprised within the "one room" she had envied.

The mud floor was damp and littered, and on a mat in a corner lounged her husband, who sharply ordered her not to stand there staring, but to get him his supper.

"That's a pretty salutation from a man who seems to have been lounging in the shade, to his wife who has worked since morning in the hot sun," retorted Mrs. Workwell, with spirit. Before she was aware he had sprung to his feet and dealt her a blow that sent her reeling against the wall. She stood dazed and founded, then turned away in fear and dismay.

"This is the last drop in my cup, the bitter cup that I myself asked for," said the poor, tired heart. "I could have borne the hard work, the dirty hut, the poor living, if only my husband had remained himself." She had always been a bright and cheerful spirit, but as with aching head she pounded the hulls from the grain, gathered brush for her fire, went to the distillery well for water and sweltered over the "big pot of porridge" with eyes smarting from smoke, what wonder that her temper sizzled on the hot stones that formed her fire-place.