

much comfort. The unfortunate Allertons rose early and sat up late, kept scanty fires, and a very humble table, and rarely went out of the house, except to church, or to take a little air and exercise at the close of the afternoon.

Most of their friends dropped off, and the few who seemed disposed to continue their acquaintance with people whose extreme indigence was no secret, were so thoughtless as to make their visits in the morning, a time which is never convenient to families that cannot afford to be idle. Mrs. Bayley, who though frivolous and inconsiderate, was really a good-natured woman, came frequently to see them; and another of their visitors was Mrs. Diggory, whose chief incentive was curiosity to see how the Allertons were going on, and a love of dictation, which induced her frequently to favour them with what she considered salutary counsel. By giving the family a little needlework, she considered herself entitled to inflict upon them, under the appearance of kindness, the most cutting observations and advices.

Spring came at last, and the Allerton family, having struggled through a melancholy and comfortless winter, had taken a larger house in a better part of the town, and made arrangements for commencing the school, in which Constance was to be chief instructress. About a fortnight before their intended removal to their new residence, one afternoon, when none of the family were at home except Constance, she was surprised by the visit of a friend from New Bedford, a young gentleman who had been absent three years on a whaling voyage, in a ship in which he had the chief interest, his father being owner of several vessels in that line.

Edward Lessingham was an admirer of ladies generally; but during his long voyage he found, by his thinking incessantly of Constance, and not at all of any other female, that he was undoubtedly in love; a fact he had not suspected till the last point of Massachusetts faded from his view. He resolved to improve his intimacy with our heroine, should he still find her at liberty, on his return to New Bedford; and if he perceived a probability of success, to make her at once an offer of his hand. When Lessingham came home, he was much disappointed to hear that Constance Allerton had been

living for more than a twelvemonth in Philadelphia. However, he lost no time in coming to see her.

When he was shown into the parlour, she was sitting with her head bent over her work. She started up on being accosted by his well-remembered voice. Not having heard of the death of her brother, and not seeing her in mourning, Edward Lessingham was at a loss to account for the tears that filled her eyes, and for the emotion that suffocated her voice when she attempted to reply to his warm expressions of delight at seeing her again. He perceived she was thinner and paler than when he had last seen her, and he feared that all was not right. She signed to him to set down, and was endeavouring to compose herself, when Mrs. Diggory was shown into the room. That lady stared with surprise at seeing a very handsome young gentleman with Constance, who hastily wiped her eyes, and introduced Mr. Lessingham.

Mrs. Diggory took a seat and producing two or three morning caps from her reticule, she said in her usual vulgar tone, "Miss Allerton I have brought those caps to you to alter; I wish you to do them immediately, that they may be washed next week. I find the borders rather too broad, and the head pieces rather too large; so I want you to rip them apart, and make the head pieces smaller, and the borders narrower, and then whip them and sew them on again. I was out the other day when you sent home my husband's shirts with the bill, but when you have done the caps, I will pay you for them all together. What will you charge for making a dozen aprons of bird's-eye diaper, for my little Anna? Unless you will do them very cheap, I may as well make them myself."

The face of Lessingham became scarlet, and starting from his chair he traversed the room in manifest perturbation; sympathizing with what he supposed to be the confusion and mortification of Constance, and regretted that the sex of Mrs. Diggory prevented him from knocking her down.

Constance, however, rallied, replying with apparent composure to Mrs. Diggory on the points in question, and calmly settling the question of the bird's-eye aprons — she knew it was only in the eyes of the vulgar-minded and the foolish, that a woman is de-