

MISS LUCY AND FERGUS.

THEY were just come. The rooms and passages were strewn with packing-boxes and household goods, chairs were stacked up on the porch, there was a bedstead in the middle of the parlor floor, everything was in confusion. In the midst of it all, there was a resounding knock at the back door.

"I am the only one who can be spared," said Lucy.

"I will receive our first visitor."

It was a boy with a big basket on his arm. "Do you want any nice blackberries this morning, miss?"

"Yes, indeed, I do; they will suit exactly for busy people like us."

The bargain was made, and the transfer from his basket to her dish began.

"You are giving me very good measure," said Lucy presently.

"I have to," he responded, glancing up at her from under his hat brim with a grin, "so long as you are standing there watching me. Maybe if you were to step inside now, it would be different."

"Would it?"

He shook the last stray berries out of the sides of his quart cup, straightened himself up, and looking her fairly in the face, answered, "No, it wouldn't. I've got my mind all made up about that, and made fast so as it will stay. I don't believe in any of your tricky ways of doing business; I believe in good measure. It costs you less in the end; but some folks can't seem to think of that, they forget all about the end till they get there. I believe in looking ahead."

"How far ahead?"

He stared at her doubtfully, and while he hesitated as to how to answer this question, Lucy asked another: "Where do you go to church?"

"Well—nowheres, I suppose."

"Not to any church at all?"

"Not yet. You see, we only moved into this neighborhood about a couple of months ago."

"Eight whole Sundays, that would make, that you have stayed away! After all, you do not give good measure to everybody, do you?"

"You mean"—he paused, then with an upward jerk of the thumb, "to Him?"

"Yes; and are you sure that you really do believe in looking ahead—all the way ahead?"

"Well you see, this is how it's been. My mother she was sick; and then, of course, there was a time getting things aside; and then everybody was strange to us, so, what with one thing and another, we haven't got started. To be sure," he added honestly, "we did go to one or two picnics and excursions and like

that. When it's a picnic you can most generally hurry over this, and let the other wait, and manage to get there; but I'll allow that it does seem, somehow, as if all things had to be just so, before folks can see their way to going to church. It ain't right, I suppose."

"Let us make another bargain, you and I," said Lucy. "Promise me that to-morrow at church, when I look for the only face that I know in this town, I shall find it. Will you?"

The boy considered, then picking up his basket, he turned off with a nod. "All right, I'll be there, if nothing happens."

As he pursued his way with his lightened fruit basket, Fergus Collins said to himself: "I guess I've knocked at all the back doors around here in the last two months. I've sold to lots of the high up church people, and they've been mightily set on knowing what the price of berries was, and if they were picked fresh; and maybe after we'd got the business settled up, they'd throw in a little something about the weather. But she's the first that ever talked any religion to me, and knows how to drive, I guess. I ain't saying but what I'd just as lief she hadn't. Maybe it would have been more comfortable for me if she had done like the rest. But that hasn't got anything to do with it, you know."

Here he was interrupted by a demand for his wares; but the customer having been attended to, his thoughts went back to his promise to Lucy.

"If it had been one of those others that asked me, I wouldn't have minded keeping them waiting, seeing that they don't seem to be in any particular hurry at all. Most likely they'd forget all about me as soon as I'd turned the corner, and wouldn't think 'o see whether I'd disappoint them or not."

But she will. I guess she keeps such things on her mind, or else they wouldn't come off of her tongue so handy; and I guess she doesn't remind folks of heaven every once in a while just for fear she won't get there herself if she don't, but because she hates to see 'em running the risk of missing it. Anyway I passed my word to her that I would go, and I didn't leave a hole of any size to slip out of, and so I'm going."

On the next Sunday morning, no sooner had Lucy taken her seat and glanced about her than she straightway decried Fergus in a front pew of the gallery. He presented a most demure appearance; his countenance was serious and his hair smooth, almost beyond recognition, and throughout the services his deportment was faultless. As soon as they were over, however, he started home at full speed, and, once arrived there, changed back into his every day self with all the despatch possible, and then set out for his favourite haunt in the woods. Bareheaded and barefooted, stretched out under the trees, he took