

IKE PARTINGTON.

CHAPTER I.

MOVING INCIDENTS.—SETTLED AT "THE CORNER."—THE CREEK AND SURROUNDINGS.—SEASONABLE PROSPECTS.—READY FOR ACTION.

It was with a feeling of real pleasure that Mrs. Partington grasped Dr. Spooner's hand, and bade him welcome; although she confessed that she was "a little decomposed" at being caught just as she was, as she was not dressed for company, and asked him to excuse her.

"Make no apology to an old friend, I beg," said he.

"Thank you, doctor; please sit down," placing a chair for him.

He did so, but immediately rose again as he found that he had seated himself, by the dim light, upon something warm; and a shallow pan of molasses-candy, which Ike had placed there a few minutes before while he went out to set a slip-noose in the fence for a cat, came up with him. Mrs. Partington was much mortified; but the doctor reassured her as he sat down safely in another chair, though a little sticky.

"I wished to see you," she said, "to ask your advice about Isaac. He isn't well, I know, because he does not act well; and what would feed him would feed a robin, he eats so little. I think of leaving here for a place where the air is more embracing, and where he can stave round and re-cooperate."

"Ah!" replied he. "That is indeed an important step."

"I wished to ask your opinion whether living contiguous to a river would be dilatory to him, for I think he has a tenderness to bronchial difficulty."

"I don't think it would be bad for him," replied the doctor, "unless he fell into the river, and couldn't swim."

"I'm shure I'm glad to hear you say so," said the dame, her anxiety evidently much relieved.

"But what about his schooling? Are there good schools where you intend to go?" asked the doctor.

"Yes: there are degraded schools, just as

they are here, and education is dispensed with pretty much the same."

"Where is the location, madam?"

"Oh! it is quite different from that, I assure you, and not low at all. The situation is lovely. The house is by the side of a creek that is not very roominous, but it is great for eelgrass."

"I mean, where is it?" and the doctor smiled at her misapprehension.

"It is on the Hardup Railroad; and I shall buy two shares of the stock if it will not cost more than five dollars for both, so that Isaac and I can come up to the stockholders' meetings."

"Your plan, my dear madam, is a good one. I certainly think the change will benefit the lad; and though we shall miss him undoubtedly, the knowledge that he is bettered by going will sustain those he leaves behind. In fact, I think that all the neighbours, seeing the advantage it will be to him, will surrender every personal consideration, and, in the kindness of their hearts, be glad that he has gone."

"I am truly delighted to know this. Our new home is not so exorbitant as some; but, if you can come to see us in your summer vexation, you will find room to be entertained."

"I shall certainly be most happy."

Ike had come in, and was looking for his candy. Dr. Spooner arose to take his leave; but the molasses troubled him, and he felt, as he said "Good-by," like a big bee which had been revelling in stolen sweets, and was taking some away with him.

When the time arrived for the promulgation of the fact that she was going, Mrs. Partington was surprised and much gratified to find so deep an interest felt in her boy. His health, the neighbours all said, should not be neglected on any account; and, as Dr. Spooner had intimated, they were not disposed to present a single obstacle. They hoped he would be better by going; and certainly there seemed much room for improvement.

Ike was unfortunate in being too popular. He was an active, bright-eyed, curly-headed, roguish little fellow—with no doubt