

irreproachable, for the proof of which she might ask Sim.

"Well, I'm glad to hear that you didn't do anything to vindicate your good name; for people judge a person's conduct by the way he behaves himself, and we are always happier when we have done nothing that our conscience acquits us of."

Ike said, "Yes'm," as he navigated through a quarter section of mustard-pie.

"And did you like farming?"

"Boss."

"What part did you like best?"

"Fishing."

"I hope you didn't go on the water to catch fish," said the dame anxiously.

"How could I catch 'em if I didn't?"

Mrs. Partington silently admitted the logical force of this question, looking at him over her glasses, and then turned his valise inside out to see if he had brought back all his clothes. She shook every garment; and, as she served an old jacket thus, a paper dropped out of one of the pockets, which she picked up.

"What is that, Isaac?" she asked.

"My gracious!" replied he "if that isn't Joe Moody's letter which I wrote him up to the farm. I put it in my pocket, and forgot to send it."

After rebuking him for his neglect to write to her, when he could find time to write to any one else, she opened the letter, and read,—

HILL-TOP, August 5.

DEAR JO—Irite this on a bee hyve in a barn turned bottom up with lots of swallows flying round but you cant ketch em and I found three hens nests which was laid away in the hay which I shall try to find some/more. I and Sim went for sum hornets down into the field and they stung Uncle Tracy on the nose wen we drowned out a woodchuck which we didnt becos he got away before we drowned him. You ort to see the crowder that me and Sim painted red white and blew and we histed the cat up on the well swape to tellegraf the boys over the river who histed up a pare of boots and a coon basket which is fun though Uncle Tracy dont like it much. I'm going fishing to-morrow with Sim and Bill and tell the fellers that we are hunky dory also the old woman up the crick.

Yure always

IKE PARTINGTON.

"Who do you have reverence to by 'old woman'?" said Mrs. Partington, folding the note, and looking at him severely over her spectacles.

Ike was confused for a moment.

"I guess I was absent-minded when I wrote that," replied he; "I should have said 'lady,' of course. I had a bad pen, and couldn't think very straight."

"Well, be careful that you don't make

such a mistake again, for to be disreputable to old people is not very credible in the young."

The first person that Ike called upon after getting home was Captain Bob, who shook hands with him cordially, as he had missed his little neighbour very much. Seeing a red mark on Ike's thumb—

"What's the matter with it?" asked the captain.

"Got a fish-hook into it," replied Ike.

Ike told him then the whole story, how he got the hook in, and how he got it out, and about the commodore's halibut caught by the tail, whereby the captain was much interested.

"But, Lor' bless ye!" said he, "ketching one halibut by the tail is no great things. Now, what if I should tell you I had been in a boat where two had been caught by the tail, and that one of the crew stood up in the bow, and druv them halibuts, like a span, through the water, drawing the boat after 'em?"

"Of course that would be twice as wonderful," replied Ike with a grin.

"So 'twould," chuckled the captain,— "so 'twould: you're right, there, every time. But 'tisn't no use in me to say I didn't see it, for you wouldn't believe such a lie; and yet a lie that nobody won't believe isn't so bad as one that comes so near the truth that it looks like it, and cheats us. Them's the lies that count. But this 'ere halibut story may be true; for, you see, there's mighty strange things happening all the time on salt water, as you know how it is yourself, being a shipwrecked sailor."

"I know you have lots of sea-stories," said Ike.

"Guess I have, my little chap, and true ones too." Huntress never went on a sealing voyage."

"Sealing voyage! What's that?"

"Why, to ketch seals like them in Bar-num's show, only they are different. The ones I went fur were the fur seals that the gals wear on their shoulders,—away to the Falkland Islands, if you know where they be."

Ike said he had heard of them.

"Well, we went out there, clear to Cape Horn, in a little schooner called 'The Lovely Polly,' to ketch seals; and we had to kill 'em to ketch 'em. It did seem cruel for us to go so fur on purpose to kill the poor things that hadn't done us no harm, and looked at us so cur'ously from the rocks with their soft dark eyes. They didn't stop long to look, though, but rolled off into the water; and 'twas real tetching to see the seal mothers