

but supper should wait for Levi, who needed something solid after Friday evening meeting. She busied herself with these details assiduously. Her life was what we might call large with trifles; she made the most of them; there was nothing better that she knew of to keep great anxieties out of the head and sickening terrors out of the heart.

There was one thing, to be sure: Mrs. Matthews called it faith in Providence. The parson's wife had her share of it, but it took on practical, often secular, forms. Sometimes she prayed aloud, as she sat there alone, quaking in every nerve. Sometimes she pitched her shrill old voice, as she did to-day, several notes above the key, and sang:

"How firm a foun-da-tion ye sa-aints of the Lo-ord!
Is laid for your fa-aith in His ex-cel-lent word!"

But she locked the house up before she sang. She made her tea, too, and drank it.

"I always feel to get a better spiritual attitude," she used to say, "when I've had my cup of tea."

The house was so neat that its rudeness became a kind of daintiness to the eye; and the trim old lady in her chocolate calico with its strip of a ruffle at throat and wrists, sat before the fireplace, meditative and sweet. like a priestess before an altar. She used to hate that fireplace with hot New Hampshire hatred—the kettle, the crane, and all the barbarous ways of managing; but she had contrived to get used to it now. It was the dream of her life to save money enough to freight a good northern cook-stove over from Chattanooga. But she expected to die without it.

The room winked brightly with shiny tin-ware hung above the fireplace, and chintz curtains at the windows. There was a centre table with a very old red and black tablecloth of the fashion of fifty years ago. The minister's writing materials adorned this table—his tall inkstand, his quill pen, sharpened with the precision of a man who does not do much writing; the cheap, blue-ruled letter paper, a quire of it; and the sacred sermon paper which Mrs. Matthews would not have touched for her life: she would as soon have touched the sermons. These were carefully packed away in the corner, in a barrel. The family Bible lay on the board-top of the barrel.

Above rose the minister's "library." This was a serious affair, greatly respected in the parish and adored by the minister's wife. It took at least three poplar shelves, stained by Mr. Matthew's own hand and a borrowed paint-brush, to hold that library. Upon the lower shelf the family clock ticked solemnly, flanked by "Cruden's Concordance" and "Worcester's Dictionary." For neighbours to these there were two odd volumes of an ancient encyclopedia, the letters unfortunately slipping from A to Z without immediate alphabetical connection. Upon such subjects, for instance, as alchemy or zoology, the minister was known to have shown a crushing scholarship, which was not strictly maintained upon all