

"I believe you managed to get through college—Have you any profession?"

"No, sir; I thought——"

"Have you any trade?"

"No, sir; my father thought that with the wealth I should inherit I should not need any."

"Your father thought like a fool, then. He'd much better have given you some honest occupation, and cut you off with a shilling—it might have been the making of you. As it is, what are you fit for? Here you are, a strong, able-bodied young man, twenty-four years old, and never earned a penny in your life! You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"And you want to marry my daughter," resumed the old man, after a few vigorous puffs of his pipe.

"Now, I've given Molly as good advantages for learning as any girl could have, and she hasn't threw 'em away; but if she didn't know how to work she'd be no daughter of mine. If I choose I could keep more servants; but I don't, no more than I choose that my daughter should be a pale, spiritless creature, full of dyspepsia, and all manner of fine lady ailments, instead of the smiling, bright-eyed, rosy-checked lass she is. I did say that she should marry no lad that had been cursed with a rich father; but she's taken a foolish liking to you, and I'll tell ye what I'll do. Go to work and prove yourself to be a man; perfect yourself in some occupation—I don't care what, so be it honest; then come to me, and, if the girl is willing, she is yours."

As the old man said this, he deliberately knocked the ashes out of his pipe against one of the pillars of the porch where he was sitting, tucked it into his pocket, and went into the house.

Pretty Mary Burton was waiting to see her lover down at the garden gate, their usual trystring place.

The smiling light faded from her eyes as she noticed his sober discomfited look.

"Father means well," she said, as Luke told her the result of his application. "And I'm not sure but what he is about right," she resumed, after a thoughtful pause; "for it seems to me that every man, be he rich or poor, ought to have some occupation."

Then, as she noticed her lover's grave look, she added softly—"Never mind; I'll wait for you, Luke!"

Luke Jordan suddenly disappeared from his accustomed haunts, much to the surprise of his gay associates.

But, wherever he went, he carried with him in his exile these words, and which were like a tower of strength to his soul—"I'll wait for you, Luke!"

One pleasant, sunshiny morning, late in October, as farmer Burton was propping up the grape-vine in his front yard, that threatened to break down with the weight of its luxurious burdens, a neat-looking cart drove up, from which Luke Jordan alighted with a quick, elastic spring, quite in contrast to his former easy leisurely movements.

"Good morning, Mr. Burton. I understood that you wanted to buy some butter-tubs and cider barrels. I think I have some here that will just suit you."

"Whose make are they?" inquired the old man, as, opening the gate, he paused by the cart.

"Mine," replied Luke, with an air of pardonable pride; "and I challenge any cooper in Canada to beat them."

Mr. Burton examined them critically, one by one. "They'll do," he said, coolly, as he set down the last of the lot. "What will you take for them?"

"What I asked you for six months ago to-day—your daughter, sir."

The roguish twinkle in the old man's eyes broadened into a smile. "You've got the right metal in you, after all," he cried. "Come in, lad, come in. I shouldn't wonder if we make a bargain, after all."

Nothing loth, Luke obeyed.

"Molly," bawled Mr. Burton, thrusting his head into the kitchen door.

Molly tripped out into the hall. The round white arms were bared above the elbows, and bore traces of the flour she had been sifting. Her dress was a neat gingham, over which was tied a blue checked apron; but she looked as winning and as lovely as she always did wherever she was found.

She blushed and smiled as she saw Luke, and then, turning her eyes upon her father, waited dutifully to hear what he had to say.

The old man regarded his daughter with a quirkil look.

Molly, this young man—mayhap you've seen him before—has brought me a lot of tubs and barrels, all of his own make—a