

## CHAPTER VI

### WHY THE COOK LAUGHED

ELGAR went home in a fine state of fume, if there was one thing that he hated more than another, it was being laughed at, and the cook's horrible merriment had pursued him until he was out of earshot. Even then the remembrance haunted him, making his ears burn and his cheeks blaze as he thought of the indignity to which he had been subjected.

He was not even mollified next morning, when a large order signed "Josh Browning," arrived at the store, which nearly cleared them out of canned goods, and took him nearly two hours to pack and despatch. His uncle was so much better that morning as to enable Mrs. Townsford to come into the store to serve the occasional customers, while Elgar worked away at the task of getting that big order filled. He seemed to hear all the time the ribald "Ha, ha, ha," of the cook pursuing him, while he weighed out currants, and raisins, and picked out packets of pepper, mustard, and other things mentioned in the long list, which should have made him so glad.

"Why, how empty the place looks!" cried Mrs.