

She turned away from him in disdainful silence. "Oh! let us make a bargain to your likin' as well as mine," he persisted, "you keep Dave an' let the other three go." "They are all mine," she said proudly, "you can't have one." "That settles it," he snorted with an oath, "but I'll be even with you yet."

At that moment David came sleepily out from the house. The mother looked from his father to him as if trying to read their hearts, and so hungry and bitter and sad was the glance, that Dave had work to keep from crying and giving up the attempt altogether. Jael stopped him and caught his arm—

"You're not goin' away, Dave?" said she, "you're not goin' to leave Jael? I'd die if I lost my boys; and to the war. Dave, to be shot an' torn, an' die alone away from mammy—you're not goin' to do it, are you?"

"Not if you say so, Jael," said the boy, trembling, while his father laughed silently at a distance to reassure him.

"I would curse him a thousand times if he took you away," she went on. "I'll die soon enough, an' you can all go then. But, wait a little, Dave, hold 'em back just a little. Time isn't long to young folks. If you go I'll kill him an' myself. I would like to kill him now, the bad, bad father! Promise me, Dave, my boy—promise Jael you'll not go away."

"Now, see here," said Luke, angrily, "if you don't let that boy go to his work right off, an' shet down on yer nonsense, I'll take the hull crowd straight to Kingston."

She let him go at this rough command, and stood watching him as he hitched up his team and drove away.

"You'd better get us somethin' to eat," said Luke, "the boys are jest gettin' up."

But his words were unheeded until Dave, having loaded his wagon, was returning; then, more assured, she entered the cabin and began her preparations for the meal, while her sleepy sons washed themselves and snarled at one another, according to custom, at the front door. It was the fatal moment for Jael. When she came out into the open air again Dave

and the horses had disappeared, and, before she could scream out her terror and despair, Luke and Dab had thrown a cloth securely over her head, thrown her on the ground, and bound her hand and foot with pitiless severity.

"It's hard, old woman," said Luke, "but you must allow you're the cause of it. Dave had to be got off, an' your shines were too much for him."

Jael made no useless resistance. The thongs on wrist and arm were strong and the gag perfect, but the agony eating her heart was stronger and left her weaker than a child. They placed her on a bed, locked the doors, and ran gleefully down the road to join Dave, waiting for them two miles away.

"How did she take it?" he asked with tender curiosity, "Jes as I said," Luke answered, "like a kitten. When a thing's got to be, it's got to be, an' that's all about it. She kicked while she could. When it warn't no more use she sat down without a tear. Give my love to Dave," says she, "an' don't get drunk an' lose your money. Oh! I know the women, boys, an' you'll know 'em in time."

The boys felt that his knowledge of the opposite sex gave him an advantage over them which not even their bold flight into the world could equal, and during the drive to Kingston, Luke "showed off" and gave them much advice as to the general management of females.

And Jael? Poor mother, so ruthlessly deprived of her beloved! When Luke returned with his blood-money she was still lying where they had left her. He unbound her hands and feet, loosened the gag, and flourished the dollars before her, but Jael neither spoke nor stirred. He felt the cold, rigid limbs, and passed his hands over the clammy features, then stole secretly and swiftly from the spot and the neighborhood. Death had bound Jael in bonds which he could not loosen, and had closed at the same time the gaping, aching wound so cruelly inflicted. Only the coarse face showed what bitter suffering she had endured before her pulses had ceased to beat.