

rail fence. The peaceful hen mother, troubled by no doubts or scruples, scratched diligently in the soft earth, clucking out her content with a world in which there were plenty of angle worms and seeming in her placidity to mock at Roxy's perturbation. Why should all these dumb creatures be so full of peace? Roxy had not learned that internal conflicts are the heritage of superiority. It is so easy for small-headed stupidity to take no thought for the morrow.

But all that Roxy, with her staring out of the window, could see was that she could not see anything at all.

"Will you tell me, Miss Adams," asked the minister, presently, "whether I am treading where I ought not—whether you are engaged?"

"No, I am not." Roxy was a little startled at his addressing her as "Miss Adams." For in a western village the Christian name is quite the common form of speech to a young person.

There was another long silence, during which Roxy again enquired of the idle-looking pea-vines, and the placid hen, and the great, green hop vine clambering over the fence. Then she summoned courage to speak:

"Please, Mr. Whittaker, give me time to think—to think and pray for light. Will you wait—wait a week—or so? I cannot see my way."

"I cannot see my way," put in Bobo, pathetically.

"Certainly, Roxy. Good-bye!"

She held out her hand, he pressed it, but without looking at her face, put on his hat, and shook hands with little Bobo, whose sweet infantile face looked after him wistfully.

He was gone and Roxy sighed with relief. But she had only postponed the decision.

The minister, who had carried away much hope, met Mr. Adams in the street, and partly because he felt friendly towards everybody and toward all connected with Roxy in particular, he stopped to talk with him; and he in turn was in one of his most contrary moods, and took pains to disagree with the preacher about everything.

"It is a beautiful day," said Whittaker at last, as he was saying good-bye, resolved perhaps to say one thing which his friend could not controvert.

"Yes, nice day," growled Adams, "but a weather-breeder."

This contradictoriness in the shoemaker took all the hopefulness out of Whittaker. The last words seemed ominous. He returned home dejected, and when Twonnet essayed to cheer him and give him an opportunity for conversation by saying that it was a beautiful day, he startled himself by replying, with a sigh:

"Yes, but a weather-breeder."

CHAPTER XIV.

CARPET RAGS AND RIBBONS.

"It seems to me ——"

It was Mrs. Henrietta Hanks speaking to her faithful Jemima on the day after the events recorded in the previous chapter of this story. Jemima and her mistress were cutting up all manner of old garments