

tracts with boards of managers, or anything of that sort, and come back on the evening train to the old farm. What do you say, Martha?"

When Martha read this, she felt that a great weight had been lifted off her mind. Her limited imagination had never pictured anything so daring—or so easy—as this method of cutting the Gordian knot that bound her, yet it appealed to her fancy, too.

The days had again grown short and the nights frosty. She could hear, in her imagination, the call of the blue-jay in the woods, fast turning to yellow and brown; the rustling of the drying stalks in the corn-fields; the chatter of the squirrels, gathering their autumn stores; the soft dropping of the nuts on the fallen leaves. She saw the glistening of the pale sunbeams on the great yellow pumpkins and the striped apples lying on the ground in the orchard. She thought of how lonely Peter must be, now that the evenings were growing longer; of how careless "men-folks" were apt to be about putting on heavier clothing at this time of year. She hesitated no longer, but sent a hastily written line by the next mail,—just this:

"Meet me at the foot of the fire-escape, Thursday evening at seven o'clock."

The harvest moon, illuminating every familiar tree and fence-corner, was shining brightly as they drove up the road to the old Grayson farmhouse. The air was soft and balmy with the late sweetness of Indian summer, the chilling days behind, and the piercing ones to come all swallowed up and forgotten in this charming season, which has the delicious sweetness and fragrance of old wine.

The shades were raised and the light from the sitting-room windows stretched out like hands toward them, as they stopped at the gate. Peter lifted his wife tenderly from the buggy, and, taking her hand, led her to the door, which was suddenly flung open as they approached.

"Welcome home, Aunt Martha! Welcome home, Uncle Peter!" shouted two voices in chorus. There were Alice and her husband and the new baby, blinking and waving its little hands as Alice held it up for them to see.

The table was spread with a dainty supper, and the delicate odors of the food greeted their nostrils. Martha's eyes filled with happy tears, as she leaned against her husband, and heard him shout, too, in his great, hearty voice, "Welcome home, everybody!"

A Wish of Home

No cumbrance of unmeaning lands be mine;
Just the enchantment of that wilding place,
And sown by random winds with leaf and vine,
Where I may see at eventide her face!

—Alonzo Rice.