

las' summer, an' ye'll understan' me. When I see him comin' in one day, ragged, an' dirty, an'—well, smellin' o' liquor some—I wa'n't glad to see him. There were things I couldn't disremember, somehow; an' I'd thought he was dead an' gone, an' got used to it; an'—I didn't seem to want him. Then—'twas kinder mean of me, but I thought he'd heerd o' the little property I'd come into, an' mebbe he was arter that, an' I kinder hardened my heart. But when I see how sickly an' peaked he looked, an' what a holler cough he had, an' how poor an' mis'erable he was, I begun to feel a little more Christian-like. So I took him in an' done for him. I nussed him, got him new clo'es, fed him up, kep' him warm an' comfort'ble, an'—with one of her quaint, sudden smiles, which always reminded me of one of those quick, darting bits of sunlight which comes at times, you know not how, over old Lafayette's rocky brow—"an' I finished up by gettin' kinder fonder on him. Now, Mis' Burton," she said, more gravely, "he's never had no 'dvantages. He never took no notice o' worms or sech creeters, an' had no idee what caterpillars turned inter or outer an' as for dead things, be they worms or folks, they was dead, to his thinkin', for goodenall. So I considered all that, an' made 'lowances, an' I begun to learn him religion, little at a time. I didn't use no Bible; he wouldn't ha' stood that—none o' his fam'ly ever would; they ain't Scriptor folks, the Gateses ain't. But I told him all about the crawlin' an' flyin' creeters an' their ways, an' held 'em up as Christian 'xamples to humans; how they went about their bizness so stiddy an' reg'lar, an' pervided for their fam'lies, an' built their own houses, an' was always to home, an' how fore-handed they was, lookin' ahead an' layin' up vittles for their child'en who's to come arter 'em, an' all them things, ye know. An' las' of all, I told him 'bout Jacob. Ye see he liked that boy of ourn better'n he ever liked anything else, an' I never let on to the boy that there was anything out o' the way with his pa; so the little feller reely set by Mr. Gates. An' when the frost got outer the groun' this spring I wanted to take up the boy an' bring him over from North Woodstock, an' keep him in the graveyard here, nigher by. An' I took Mr. Gates along; an' as we was bringin' the little coffin home I jest told him that story about the other body and the mir'cle I see with my own eyes."

"And was he impressed by it?" I asked, as she paused for breath.

"Well, I don't know. He's got sorter wat'ry eyes nat'rally—all the Gateses have—but I kinder thought they was wetter'n common when I got through, but 'twas a blowy day; an' he was real careful about liftin' the coffin, an' when the men was helpin' fill up the grave he stood close by, an' I heerd him ask 'em not to put so much dirt on the top, nor stomp it down hard, an' I s'mised he was thinkin' o' the risin', an' plannin' how the little feller'd come out."

The hard, work-worn hands brushed something from the thin cheek as she spoke, and I thought that even the "Gateses" by marriage seemed sometimes to have "wat'ry eyes."