

## HOUSEHOLD.

## Mrs. Dale's Inopportunity.

A TRUE STORY.

(By Elizabeth Preston Allan.)

It was a blue Monday at the Glade-Spring Manse; one of the bluest. The preacher felt stiff and sore in mind and body and in spirit. Regularly once a week he felt that his work was all in vain; and that it would be better to be hoeing corn; and then the tired body and mind and spirit rallied, and on Tuesday he thanked God and took courage, or perhaps he took courage to thank God.

But in addition to Mr. Dale's sore muscles, his wife had a nervous headache, and could not lift herself up to brighten the Monday sky, as she was apt to do, by producing a new book, borrowed for the occasion, or by suggesting some kind of picnic suited to the parson's taste. For Mrs. Dale insisted that the Fourth Commandment required a seventh rest day, and since her good man worked on Sunday, he must, as a good Christian, rest on Monday.

Moreover, it was raining hard to-day, with the dreariness of November, and the hopeless chill of approaching winter; everybody felt depressed; the cook in the kitchen, over her bread that was refractory; the children, missing the mothering that usually sweetened life; and most of all, the preacher himself.

And then the door-bell rang. Mrs. Dale lifted her aching head to listen; but eight-year-old Roger did not leave her long in doubt: 'A book-agent, mamma,' he said, coming back from the study, with an amusing imitation of the despair a book-agent generally awakens.

'Did he come in, Roger?'

'Oh, of course he came in. Papa took him right to the fire and dried him off; he was wet as everything.'

Half an hour went by, and not a sound from the study. Mrs. Dale turned restlessly on her pillow and sighed. Some one had lent her 'Seats of the Mighty,' and she had hoped to have her morning enlivened by the tonic of this fine historical romance: how could a book-agent think—Ah, there was the study door! But only the preacher crossed the hall, and softly opened his wife's door. He came in with a flush of pleasure on his handsome face, and a great light in the deep-set grey eyes.

'Wife,' he said, with a boyish ring in his voice, 'I have come to ask a favor of you. I know things are upside down with us just now, but I want you to let me keep this 'ad with us a few days.'

'The book-agent, John?'

'Yes, poor fellow, he isn't any book-agent to hurt; he is just a homesick, heartsick, discouraged boy, who set out with high hopes of earning some money for a college course, and who has lost money instead, and is miserable. I am sure I know a thing or two that will help him, if I can keep him by me a while; in fact, Isabel, I want very much to keep him; I look upon him as an opportunity.'

It was as well, perhaps, that our country parson did not recognize the adoring admiration that shone upon him from the white face on the pillow; what he did not miss, was the sweet mirth of his wife's answer.

'Of course you shall have your book-agent, John—as if you needed to ask leave! But you will have to let me say that I look upon him to-day as an inopportunity.'

The preacher went back to his study laughing, and Mrs. Dale felt that the book-agent had after all proved a better tonic than the story of Quebec. All day long she heard the cheerful sounds of entertainment going on, interspersed with visits to the cellar for apples, and to the woodshed for nuts. After the early dinner—there was a good supply of Sunday's extras left over—Mr. Dale took his young guest out visiting in his tight little buggy, regardless of the rain.

The wife was on the sitting-room couch when they got back, and her gentle, bright

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welcome, went straight to the desolate boy's heart. He felt a host boyish desire to have a good cry when she took his hand and said how nice it was to have him at the Manse.

Well, it rained and rained, and all those wet days Mr. Dale held on to his guest, though he was too busy now for much entertainment.

On Thursday morning the sun shone brightly on a drenched world, and our young book-agent left the manse, refreshed in mind and body, with a new hope and courage, and an undying belief in the loving kindness of Christian people. A letter or two passed between him and his entertainers, at intervals, and then they lost sight of him for long years.

But one day at a meeting of Synod, Mr. Dale—no longer the handsome young man you saw that rainy Monday—brought up a stranger to speak to his wife; he had preached the night before, but she had failed to catch his name; and what a strange introduction it was: 'Isabella,' said her husband, 'did you ever see this gentleman before?' This was your Inopportunity, my dear!

## Useful Hints.

Put sugar in the water used for basting meats of all kinds; it gives a good flavor. To give a fine flavor to corned beef hash, use good stock for moistening, with a pinch of salt, sugar and cayenne.

In taking down the stove, if any soot should fall upon the carpet or rug, cover quickly with dry salt before sweeping and not a mark will be left.

The stringy coat left on bananas after they are peeled should be removed before eating. It is this, like the white, pithy underskin of an orange, which is indigestible.

To those who study the niceties of detail in the preparation of even a simple dish, it may be suggested that chocolate used as a drink is much improved if blended several hours beforehand. It is better even to break the unsweetened chocolate into an earthen bowl the night before, adding cold water and covering closely. In this way the flavor of the chocolate is best extracted.

Save every bone, whether beef, mutton, veal, poultry or game, as well as all juices in the meat dishes, for the stock pot. Into this storehouse of wealth, for such the stock pot is, go the tough ends, from the rib roasts, which would only become tasteless and dry if roasted; also the fat ends cut from mutton chops, the bone left from sirloin steak, and the carcasses from either poultry or game, as well as the bones from the roasting pieces.

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