

Oh, dastard nation! dastard deed!
 They starve like beasts in pen and fold!
 While we hoard wheat to sell for gold.
 "Too much wheat!" Men's lives are dross!
 "How shall the farmers be saved from loss?"
 "Too much wheat!" Do the figures lie?
 What wondrous yields! Put the ledgers by!
 "Too much wheat!"

Oh, summer rain,
 And sun, and sky, and wind from west,
 Fall not, nor shine, nor blow again.
 Let fields be desert, famine guest
 Within our gates who hoard for gold
 Millions of bushels of wheat unsold,
 With men and women and children dead
 And daily dying for lack of bread!
 "Too much wheat!" Good God, what a word
 A blasphemy in our borders heart.

—Helen Jackson.

JOHN DORN'S SON.

The tide was out in Great South Bay, Long Island; east and west, like wavy fields of green and brown, the Bellmore marshes stretched away in unbroken loneliness to meet the dim beauty of the horizon. The wind had gone down, leaving the broad bosom of the water as still as a mirror upturned on the level sands. The sun, shining through countless leagues of haze, cast tremulous shadows toward the east, and, rising up with shaded brows to meet its rays, John Dorn, a cheery fisherman, stood out in silhouette against the sky. Fast mingling with the purple and gray of the leeward rim of sea and sky, a lazy schooner winged its southward flight, and when the dusky distance closed upon it John Dorn and his weather-beaten old boat alone broke the changeless monotony of marsh and meadow. Left high and dry by the receding tide, the old boat lay bolt upright in the soft mud, as taut and trim as though moored in her moss-grown berth at Bellmore landing. Her sails hung limp and motionless against her mast, and about her shining deck a brown-haired little girl romped and laughed in childish glee.

It was unspeakably lonely out on the wide-reaching marshes, but as honest John Dorn shaded his eyes with his rough brown hand and gazed seaward he gayly whistled a tune that he had learned up in the little white-steeped meeting-house in Bellmore village. It did not seem lonely or dreary out there, for to him it was home. The blue sky above him and the dimpling shallows before him spoke only of home; the marshes had been his playground in youth, and the meadows behind him were as well

known as the little garden back of his own modest cottage among a clump of distant trees. Even though the marshes had not been as familiar as the stubby fingers on his weather-beaten hands, and had the sky been black with clouds and driving rain, John Dorn would have been just as happy and free from care, for up in the little house among the trees a son had been born to bless his approaching old age. A daughter he had already, and another slept beneath the sea grass in his garden, but until this day a son had been denied him.

It would not be fair to say that John Dorn had grumbled at fate when grave middle life came and saw no sons in his family, but somewhere down in the depths of his stout heart he argued that, although girls were good enough in their way, and perhaps were necessities in an all-wise scheme, yet only a boy could stand his trick at the wheel or reef the mainsail in a gale of wind. John Dorn wanted some one to bear him company in his silent pilgrimages to the fishing grounds and the oyster beds, and in turn to guide the old sloop out to sea when he himself should in the course of time be kept ashore by the accumulated rheumatism of many years of active life. And so, on this soft Summer day, when a little, mewling red-headed son had taken possession of the household, John Dorn lifted up his honest soul in thanksgiving, and went away to his work in the marshes as blithely as though his wedding day was not a score of years behind him in the dead but unforgotten past.

The world was bright and fair to John Dorn that day, for in the future he saw his son, strong, sturdy-limbed and ruddy, steering with heavy hand the laboring vessel, pulling morrily the weary oar, and on the Sabbath day trudging manfully to church with a swarm of rosy children. John Dorn smiled and hummed a solemn hymn, and in the height of his contentedness stooped down and imprinted upon his daughter's wavy hair a forgiving kiss. Henceforth the innocent little girl should not be denied the love which disappointment had withheld for so long a time. As he guided his sloop through the serpentine channel leading out to the bay his heart became as water, and in the ennobling influence of that feeling he seemed to lose his sunburn and his wrinkles and to grow young again.

Quickened by the breath of awakened love, the vague ambition of early life

came back, and in the mirage that somehow loomed up above the blue surface of the bay he saw his son, and incidentally himself, crowned with all the honors that a grateful, respecting local community could bestow. Unquestioning assumption of the probability, or even the possibility, of future social or political preformment for his son was proof positive that no such distinction was likely to be accorded him, the argument in the matter being, in effect, that nothing but the most disheartening of native plodders could come of such a combination of dullness and unreasoning hope. Had John Dorn's ambition taken definite form and sought by such means as lay within the narrow circle of the life along shore to carve out the way to the coming man's ennoblement there might have been grounds for hope, but at its best John Dorn's ambition was as formless as the night, and as discouraging as his wife's inferiority.

Clams were plentiful that day, and John Dorn's broad, flat feet churned them out of the thick mud with more than usual rapidity and ease. Again and again the wicker basket returned to the waiting boat, piled high with captured shells, until, when the tide ceased to run out and the western sun dipped angrily toward the hazy west, John Dorn drew his brown arm across his heated brow and said that he had done enough. Smiling contentedly at the sleepy little girl, he said he would go home with the new tide. To go home? To whom? To the baby; to his son! Perhaps by this time his wife, remembering previous conversations on the subject, had named him. And would he answer to the plain, old-fashioned name "John?" Perhaps so. It was old-fashioned, no doubt, to have the paternal name descend through many generations, but it was a good, honest way, and to one honest, plodding woman in the little house among the trees it would give deep satisfaction.

Waiting for his boat to float, John Dorn spattered the advancing tide merrily with his bare feet and played hide-and-go-seek with his little girl. All resentment over the birth of a daughter had vanished now, and the father was happy and proud in having both daughter and son. It made things even, he thought, and who could tell what the future would bring? Then, as he stood there aimlessly swinging his foot to and fro in the cool water, an idea seemed to enter into and take possession of his