

psalm was he obliged to stop for the purpose of wiping from his eyes two large tear-drops, which seemed sadly out of place on the broad, good-humoured face of the deacon. Other eyes there were, too, on whose long lashes the heavy moisture glistened, and whose faces told of some sad event which either had happened or was about to happen. The cause of all this sorrow was this: Ere the night for the weekly prayer meeting again came, Deacon Wilder and his family, who were universally liked, would be far on the road toward home in the dense forests of Kentucky. In that old-fashioned kitchen were many who had come long, weary miles for the sake of again shaking the deacon's hand, and again telling his gentle wife how surely their hearts would go with her to her home in the far west.

The meeting proceeded decently and in order, as meetings should, until near its close, when Deacon Wilder, for the last time, lifted up his voice in prayer with the loved friends and neighbours he was leaving. At this point, the grief of the little company burst forth unrestrainedly. The white portion of the audience gave vent to their feelings in tears and half-smothered sobs, while the blacks, of whom there was a goodly number present, manifested their sorrow by groans and loud lamentations.

Among these was an old negro named Cato, who, together with his wife Dillah, had formerly belonged to Deacon Wilder's father, but on his death they had passed into the possession of the oldest son, Capt. Wilder, who lived within a stone's throw of his brother. Old Cato was decidedly a Methodist in practice, and when in the course of his prayer Deacon Wilder mentioned that in all human probability he should never on earth meet them again, old Cato, who was looked upon as a pillar by his coloured brethren, forgetting in the intensity of his feelings the exact form of words which he wanted, fervently ejaculated, "Thank the Lord!" after which Dillah, his wife, uttered a hearty "Amen!"

This mistake in the choice of words was a slight set back to the deacon, who was feeling, perhaps, a trifle gratified at seeing himself so generally regretted. But Cato and Dillah were a well-meaning couple, and their mistake passed unnoticed, save by the young people, who smiled a little mischievously. The meeting continued until a late hour, and the hands of the long Dutch clock pointed to the hour of midnight ere the windows of Deacon Wilder's dwelling were darkened, and its inmates were dreaming, may be, of a home where good-byes and partings were unknown.

Next morning, long before the sun had dallied with the east until over its gray cheek the blushes of daylight were stealing, the deacon's family were astir. Fires were lighted in the fire-place, candles were lighted in the candlesticks, and breakfast was swallowed in a space of time altogether too short for the credulity of modern dyspeptics. Then commenced the exciting process of "pulling down" and "packing up." Bedsteads were knocked endwise, bed-clothes were thrown all ways, crockery was smashed, and things generally were put where there was no possible danger of their being found again for one twelvemonth. Deacon Wilder scolded, his wife Sally scolded; old Cato and Dillah, who had come over to superintend matters, scolded; the other negroes ran against each other and every way, literally doing nothing except "'clarin' they's fit to drap, they's so tired;" while George, the deacon's oldest son, looked on, quietly whistling "Yankee Doodle."

In the midst of this hubbub, little Charlie, a bright, beautiful, but delicate boy of nine summers, crept away to the foot of the garden, and there, on a large stone under a tall sugar maple, his face buried in his hands, he wept bitterly. Poor Charlie! he was taking his first lesson in home-sickness, even before his childhood's home had disappeared from view. He had always been opposed to emigrating to Kentucky, which, in his mind, was all "dark, dark woods," where each member of the family would be tomahawked by the Indians every day at least, if not oftener.

But Charlie's tears were unavailing—the old homestead was sold, the preparations were nearly completed, and in a few hours he would bid good-bye to the places he loved so well. "I shall never sit under this tree again," said the weeping boy, "never again play in the dear old brook; and when I die there, I shall be afraid to lie alone in the dark woods, and there will be none but our folks to cry for me, either."

A soft footstep sounded near, two little arms were thrown round Charlie's neck, and a childish voice whispered, "Oh, Charlie, Charlie, I will cry when I hear you are dead, and if you will send for me before you die, I will surely come."

It was Ella, his cousin. She was a year his junior, and since his earliest remembrance she had been the object of his deepest affection. Together they had played in the forest shade, together in the garden had they made their flower-beds, and together had they mourned over torn dresses, lost mittens, bumped heads, nettle stings, and so forth. It is not altogether improbable that Charlie's grief arose partly from the fact that Ella must be left behind. He had always been