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adjustment required some time. Then he clasped his hands round the uppermost knee and gently rocking back and forth, went ahead, bravely. His voice was rather severe.

"It's bad to turn folks out of houses and homes—that's what. It's vice. Faithie said you was a-goin' to do it to us, an' father's sick. Father's dread'dly sick, so he cries sometimes, like this—'O, Nancy, Nancy, Nancy!' (Nancy's mamma) but I guess that's when he's 'fraid of the wolf?'"

"The wolf?"

"Yes, there's a wolf father keeps hcin' 'fraid will come to our front door. I heard him tell mamma so. But I ain't any 'fraid of that wolf. I'd—I'd choke him!"

Cupid, in his fervor of courage, lost his precarious little balance, and was so embarrassed at his tumble that, for quite a minute, there was silence in Basil Todd's comfortable room.

"Scuse me, if you please," the little fellow faltered, at last, his sweet small face reddened with chagrin. How many dreadful things he was doing—telling folks they were vice, right to their faces, an' tumbling off his chair! chairs! What would Faithie say? But maybe the man hadn't seen him fall off—he was looking out o' the window just his hard's he could.

Cupid breathed a sigh of relief and softly re-established himself on the chair. Not till then did Mr. Todd look round at him. "So 'Faithie' thinks I'm a bad man?" he said.

"Yes, if you'll 'scuse her, she does, now honest. You see, she's 'scouraged. It make you 'scouraged when there isn't any money, an' you're going to be turned right out. I'm a boy. Faithie's only just a girl. I'm going to tell Lance how it makes me cry an' mamma an' everybody."

"What's Lance got to do with it?" the old man's voice rasped unpleasantly.

"Lance? Why, Lance b'long to Faithie, you know. When his sailboat comes in, he's going to marry her, an' Faithie 'll marry him, too, likely as not. That's what. He says if there's a shipwreck happens to his sailboat, he'll marry Faithie just 'xactly the same, if it takes all summer."

"The dickens he will."

"Yes, an' he's goin' to give me a ride in the sailboat if it doesn't get upset."

Cupid had risen and taken up Faithie's bow, edging slowly toward the door. "I must be goin' now," he explained, "guess they'll need me at home."

But Basil Todd forced him gently back on the chair. "Hold on, Cupid," he said, "I never had a valentine before in my life, and I'm seventy years old. I must keep this one a little longer. Besides, I'm trying to make up my mind to send 'Faithie' a valentine by you, when you go home. Would you be willing to carry it for me?"

"O, yes," Cupid cried, with a little undertone of delight. "I'd be an willing!"

"Faithie's the bestest girl there is, an' I love her the most of anybody—your Lance," he added stoutly. He got back in the chair and waited very patiently, drumming his toes now and then by way of a gentle hint. For the old man opposite seemed lost in reverie. His shaggy brows were knit and his big, square chin worked uneasily under his beard. He drummed his toes, too, with monotonous thuds against his footstool. The clock ticked insistently, loudly.

After a while he glanced up. The child had fallen asleep, with his curly head banded to one side, and his pretty, baby features contorted oddly. Basil Todd straightened up, the little head with a new gentleness in his



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touch—three, four, five, the clock struck sharply, and Cupid's eyes flew open.

"Have you made up your mind?" he asked. "Are you goin' to send Faithie's valentine?"

Basil Todd was pacing the room slowly, with noiseless, slippered feet. The paper package he held in his hand he dropped into Cupid's quiver, pressing it safely down into it.

"Yes, I've made up mind—it takes us tough old chaps a good while. There, I've put the valentine in here. You may give it to 'Faithie' with a bad old man's compliments. And she may tell her Lance, if she likes, that his ship is sighted in the offing. It's making good time into port now. Can you remember all that?"

Cupid repeated the words once or twice after the old man, then nodded,

satisfied. "I can say 'em, I guess, but they're quite a long say, ain't them?" he said.

Faith and his mother were waiting very anxiously for him—too glad to see him to scold him for giving them such a fright. And how the gladness grew when, together, they read Faith's big queer valentine!

Whoever heard of a mortgage cancelled, receipted, playing at valentine before? Or whoever saw happier, more grateful women than mamma and Faithie were, over it? And how quickly the "bad old man" became the good old man—the dear, kind old man!

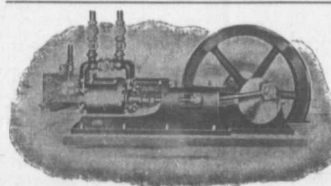
It takes so short a time to transfigure a world when there are human hearts in it, with little children to lead them and ships in the offing, just coming in!

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