

shut herself in. Not a word had been exchanged. He slowly retired. The next building was a lumber-office. A man with spectacles was bent over some papers at a desk. He looked up, and hearing the canvasser, detected at a glance his mission, and stared coldly at him. Our friend began, in a faltering voice,—

"I have called to solicit your—"

"That'll do," said the lumber-man, in a stern voice, resuming his inspection of the papers on the desk.

The canvasser gave him a look as if he would like to knock him endways, and then withdrew. Outside the building he paused a moment, as if undecided what to do. He was strongly tempted to go home, and give up in despair, but the thought of his poverty checked this impulse. He looked up and down the almost deserted street, on which the sun lay in a glare of heat. Not a ray of hope did he detect in the buildings or in the air. He passed three houses without the courage to call on any of them. Those who saw him pass must have wondered if he was not ill, or deranged. At the fourth house he stopped. A little girl answered his call. She saw the books under his arm, and taking the cue from his appearance, said,—

"We don't want a ything." And she, too, closed the door in his face. Smarting under the humiliation of his defeat, he passed several houses without calling and brought up at a factory. He went through the building to the office, his feet feeling as if full of lead, and his heart scarcely lighter. It was only a picture of the pale-faced, sobbing woman at home that gave him the strength to step at all. There were several men busy in the long room through which he passed. They saw his mission, and turned up their noses in derision. They worked for their living, and could afford to despise the lank shirk who went about selling books and living on the fat of the land. Their looks were not undetected by this miserable man with the picture of the crying woman in his heart, and he went into the office with an air of humiliation not calculated to command the respect of the three young clerks at work there. He entered, and removed his hat. The three clerks started at him, but said nothing about his being seated.

"I have called, gentleman," he commenced, in a voice he strove to make firm, but which trembled in spite of himself, "to see if you would like to subscribe to a new book."

An expression of dislike showed so plainly on their faces, that he stopped short. The three young men enjoyed this very much. They came very near to being the victims

themselves, but by showing an uncompromising front they had saved themselves, and overcome a nuisance and a bore. Highly satisfied with their success, they placidly returned to their work, leaving him standing bare-headed, with an uninterrupted view of their backs. For a moment he remained there, confused and sick at heart, not waiting to remain, and still not having the courage to go. But the young men paid no more attention to him, and his position becoming unbearable, he replaced his hat and slunk out of the building. With a heavy heart and a tortured mind he went his way, stopping here and there with more or less luck, but no sales. The noon passed without his lunch. He had not the heart to eat it. Had it been three yards of lead pipe, he could not have felt less like boiling it down. There was a lump in his throat by which a cambric needle would have found difficulty in forcing its way. He began to notice that the people whom he passed were eyeing him with dislike, and giving him the greater share of the walk. It was hard to be poor, it was hard to be so unsuccessful, but it was ten times harder to be an object of derision, scorn, distrust, and contempt. He started for home with an aching heart. It was going back to a full contemplation of his miserable condition, but there were love and sympathy there, with all the distress, and the miserable man stood sorely in need of them.

When he went in his wife heard him, and came into the room where he was. The look of hopeful expectation died out of her pale face in a flash. One glance at him told the whole story more eloquently than words could have done. He laid down his books, shivering as he did so. When he went to turn toward her, the loving arms were about his neck, and the tired head, with the sobbing voice, was pressed upon his shoulder.

"Oh, Lizzie, it was all so dreadful!" he whispered.

She drew her arms tighter about his neck.

"Don't talk of it, John. You did the best you could, I know, and if you have failed you cannot help it. We have got each other, and the children, John."

"Yes, Lizzie, but I am not the man I was when when I left you this morning. Then I was respected, if I was poor."

"John!" she cried in an affrighted voice, looking him in the face. "What have you done?"

"Nothing, my dear wife, but to try to get bread. But I have been made to feel that I was a scallawag, a leer, an outcast, a scoundrel, and a thief. I have been shut out of houses, bullied from shops, and shun-