

another corner were a half-dozen young men each intent on impressing the others that he cared nothing for the maidens across the room, but each joke was in a high key for the benefit of the adored one at the sewing machine.

The parson's eyes dwelt upon the face of the girl. He noticed the brown curls that fell across the blue-veined temples; he noticed the parted lips and a strange light in her eyes as the music seemed to wander far out in the woods, where the moonlight fell in small diamond points, under the dark fir branches. He noticed again the softened sympathy as her eyes rested on the dejection of Mrs. Carter.

"She is young," he thought, "she is good, and," there was something strange with his breath, "she is beautiful."

Was it the crooning violin, or was his imagination playing tricks? He seemed to hear beating through his brain that old chorus from the "Trovatore":

"Not to a shadow link thee, not to the joys that fade,  
Turn unto visions fairer where hope is  
ne'er betrayed."

He crossed the room, and sat beside Mrs. Carter, giving her every assurance of the baby's safety. He even put forward the questionable argument that the child was much safer and more comfortable with Ike, under the supposition of sweet cream, than were its real presence known. So an hour passed.

John Corkle and Spencer came into the house.

"They're coming, I guess," said John, "there's a dog barking away down the road."

Everyone was alert. The young men rushed outside. Yes, already they could hear the faint, faint tinkle of bells, and old Scampy's dog had joined in the chorus.

At the next out-look, voices could be heard, which were soon dis-

tinguished as the strident tones of Tom and the answering drawl of Ike. Now they were seen to cross the meadow by Eli Carter's house and enter the shadow of the poplars by Corkle's. They must have met midway in the bog. In a minute, with much snorting and creaking, they were at the door. Out of the cloud of steam that rose from the horses Tom appeared with the basket. He rushed blowing into the house, and with a hoarse "Gee Wilikins," in lieu of a victorious shout, laid it on the table. Mrs. Carter quickly unwound the plaid, raised the lid, and the babe looked up and smiled.

No time was lost now. The parson was still in surplice and stole. Prayer-books were passed around, and an old hymn rang out through the night:

"In token that thou shalt not fear,  
Christ crucified to own."

Reverently they knelt in prayer, firmly the vows were taken, in a solemn hush the young priest blessed the water, baptised, received, and kissed the child, placing her in the arms of her mother. The infant itself raised a loud and ineffectual protest as the water was poured upon its head, but this was received by all present as a joyful omen of its future worldly felicity. Now, like a roll of thunder, from these rough voices came the Lord's Prayer, followed by the subdued tones of the priest in the concluding collect. Then, with the searching words of exhortation to godparents and parents, the holy rite was done.

The cramped restraint was broken, voices grew loud and natural, and Long Tom passed round from man to man a large bottle with three stars near the neck, accompanied by a glass tumbler. Edie McMahon and the other girls, with flowing aprons that rivalled the glimmering snow outside, fluttered here and there, with smoking meat and steaming tea. A semi-subdued roar from Tom was an invita-