

the church, this Sunday afternoon, was deserted, and down the long white stretch of road no object showed, save a few cows, leisurely cropping the grass fringing the way on either side. Once in the course of an hour he met a couple on horseback, a young girl who stared at him from under her pink sun-bonnet in wonderment, while her companion, a stalwart country swain, with handsome, boyish face and honest brown eyes, divided his attention between him and the frisky colt, coquetting from one side of the road to the other at sight of the bicycle and rider. Mr. Gray heard their laugh as he sped on and with good-nature admitted mentally he must be a mirth-provoking object, covered as he was with dust and warm with his exertions. At one point an old wagon road, smooth and hard as a race track, and deeply overshadowed by foliage, tempted him from the dusty highway. Lost in thought, he followed its quiet path, heedless of the passing of time or the changing face of the sky, seen at intervals through the canopy of green; but as he proceeded, a streak of lightning shot its zig-zag course through the gathering gloom, while a low, ominous growl of thunder announced the storm's approach. The prospect of encountering a summer storm in the fierceness with which it breaks over such desolate places was not a pleasant one, and as he gained the brow of the hill he sprang from his wheel and searched the landscape, hoping to sight some habitation. All that met his view, however, were hills—hills bare and rugged, hills covered with deep undergrowth or showing an occasional patch of young corn or wheat—nothing but the everlasting hills. Yet how beautiful was the prospect under the gloom and hush that come with a gathering

storm! The soft purple haze that had bathed the land was being slowly gathered up, the while the thin sheets of the approaching rain were spread like an unbroken line of sails along the horizon. In a few minutes, he knew, that phantom fleet would have gained on him to pour down its merciless shot and shell from its unseen guns. As he was debating whether to turn back and give it chase, or press on, the friendly bark of a dog from the hollow below came to his glad ears. Springing on his wheel, he dashed forward and soon reached the bottom of a hill, where stood a comfortable log house, in the yard surrounding which sat a man, reading, while a little boy and girl played on the grass near. Over in the barn-lot a flock of sheep were being turned into their shelter for the night by a shaggy shepherd dog, whose bark pleasantly broke the stillness. A man stood at the gate counting his white sheep as they passed him in huddling groups, while at a short distance was a woman, her attention between the calf she was feeding from a pail and a number of turkeys spread around, impatiently awaiting their expected supper.

"Nettie," she cried to the little girl, "bring me the chicken feed, quick!" and as the child sprang from the grass to do the bidding, she caught sight of the minister now leaning against the fence, regarding the scene with pleased eyes. He smiled back at the girl's startled glance, wherewith she scampered off, followed by her brother, to whom, by some mental telegraphy, she had communicated her knowledge of the stranger's presence. A few first big drops of rain warned the minister to secure shelter, so lifting his wheel over the low stone wall, he crossed and announced his approach to the unconscious reading man by a