

were taking the Wilkeses quite seriously.

As I went about the parsonage helping in what ways I could, the familiar furnishings, Amy's pictures and bric-a-brac, Sam's chessmen and violin, the silent piano, all the trifles which our eyes had rested on from time to time with amusement or disapproval, as the case might be, now seemed touched with a peculiar pathos. I even recalled the quaint little love-story which Amy had told me on that fateful evening, and could no longer feel that there was any element of comedy in it.

Sunday came and went by, and there were no services.

Monday night there was a scarcely perceptible change for the better, and I was sent home for a night's rest. As I opened the hall door early Tuesday morning, I had a glimpse of Sam walking the parlour and dining-room with Minnie perched on his arm. As he had paid no attention to the child since the night of the storm, I knew quite well that something had happened. In the kitchen I found Lizzie Deale getting breakfast with a satisfied face.

"She's better," she said; "she's going to get well."

All day one met with indications that the strain was over. Sam, who had scarce spoken to any one for days, whistled as he brought wood and water for the kitchen. He played with Minnie; he teased Mrs. Trevor, which seemed to us the extreme of audacity; when he was sent on an errand to the store he stopped joyfully to shake hands with every one he met, in his old-time hearty manner. We looked on and rejoiced. Had it not been that the house must be kept very quiet he might have celebrated by playing gigs on his violin, and no one would have objected. We should have felt that even that had in it a touch of solemnity.

"She's taking us in," Mrs. Davis said to me, grimly, as we were washing dishes together in the kitchen that afternoon, the exhausted Lizzie having been sent to bed.

"Mrs. Trevor?" I asked.

Mrs. Davis nodded with a slight compression of her lips. "I was sorry for her when she came. Of course, we were all sorry, and we treated her the best we knew how. But her mind's pretty well made up. I guess. She don't think much of our ways."

"She treated us very nicely through it all, don't you think?" I ventured to suggest.

"Oh, yes, she tried to be nice," this a little contemptuously, "but she knows very well we ain't lived in the city all our days."

The difference between Mrs. Trevor's habits of thought and those of the Lyndoners was not altogether a matter of "living in the city," but it was not best to say so.

"Mrs. Trevor seems to me too real a lady to be hard on us," I said, cautiously, "but we must expect that she will misunderstand us a good deal. As you say, our ways are so different."

"And, perhaps, we don't understand her much better," said Mrs. Davis magnanimously. "Of course, it don't make any particular difference what she thinks, any way, only I'm always one to side with my own folks."

Oh, yes, indeed, "blood is thicker than water." There never was a truer saying. And not only for those akin to us by the ties of blood, but for those among whom we live and labour, and with whom we, in a sense, share our life, there is that instinctive, underlying sense of sympathy and affection.

It was not so many years since Lyndon had resented my intrusion upon its quiet life. I looked at Mrs. Davis, as she stood at the table, washing dishes with her toil-hardened hands, and thought how, during those days when we were face to face with the realities of life, she had constantly shown herself capable and to be depended on, where I was ignorant and helpless. Perhaps it was not strange that it gave me a keen sense of pleasure to know that this woman, who "always sided with her own folks," had spoken to me as though she felt I would quite understand, as though she recognized in me a woman who, in very truth, worked beside her.

"There is one thing we may be quite sure of," I said, in answer to her words, "if Mrs. Trevor should be disposed to criticise us openly, as, after all, I think she will not, Amy would never allow it."

"No, I guess she wouldn't," said Mrs. Davis, with emphasis, and I knew that Lyndon had at last adopted the Wilkeses.

What Mrs. Trevor's impressions of us actually were, I never found out.

She spent fourteen nights in the little spare room, the defects of which