

the picnic, and Sissy had lost the umbrella.

John remembered that he had not collected his mind by counting the squares on Tommy's apron, which had disappeared with Tommy; it seemed that a great opportunity was lost.

But Sissy too was tired, and would go to bed. When she came to say good night, her father asked her how old she was, and Sissy told him she was eleven, and her mother said:

"Why, John! what a funny question!" And John said nothing at all. And so, presently, Sissy too had gone to bed, and her mother went up with her; and John said he would finish his smoke.

He did not smoke, however, but stood in the sitting-room where they had left him. When he was quite alone he stretched his hands with one mighty, pathetic gesture above his head. The awful power of a human home was on him; he felt as helpless before it as the child in the cradle. His soul shot out tendrils everywhere; he could have clasped the tall rocking-chair, the baby's sock that had fallen beneath it, the old mat that stood before his wife's sewing-chair, the scraps of her work scattered about. Her voice and Sissy's came from the bedroom above. Tommy was singing himself to sleep with a droning sound:

"My ome—izzen Ye-ev-ing."

"*I'll bet the chap that wrote that never had one to his name anywhere else!*" cried John True.

Mary came down stairs. As she entered she glanced at him, but said nothing.

She moved about with gentle bustle, picking up scraps of cloth and spools, and the children's playthings; she drew the green paper shades, and smoothed the worn red table-cloth, and pulled her rocking-chair around away from the light.

"Wy shoulda ma-a-ma!"

sang Tommy, and so sank into his first

nap, from which he aroused but once to ejaculate—

"Twyalsypere!"

in a firm voice, before silence settled for that summer night upon the cheap white house.

Mary True sat beside her husband in the quiet room; she was run-and-back-stitching the seam on a red delaine dress for Sissy.

"It's her fall dress," she said, "but I thought I'd begin. I made it over out of that one of mine—do you remember, John?"

"I guess so," said John, with a mighty effort of the imagination. "It looks as if I had seen some woman wear it. I guess I remember it, Mary."

"Why, *John!* It's the dress I had made up one wedding-day two years ago to surprise you in. And, John! you kissed me three times extra in it the night I put it on, and said I looked younger than Clara Severby. I should think *even* a *man* would remember that!" with great contempt.

"Why, yes, I *said* I remembered it," replied John, meekly. "Clara looks old," he went on, "since Severby—are you going to send Sissy to the High School, Mary?"

"I—have always thought we would educate Sissy," said Sissy's mother, speaking slowly. "And John, dear—"

"Well, Mary?"

"Don't you suppose—"

"Don't I suppose?"

"Don't you think we might, *somehow*, manage—other folks do that ain't better off than we are—don't you think we might—if I didn't have any new dresses, John, only the children's things—and if we didn't have much doctoring—don't you think we *might* send him to college?"

"Send who to college—Severby?"

"I *meant* Tommy," said Mary, hanging her brown head, "but I know it's—"