THE YEARS BETWEEN.

A Novel by William J. Fischer. Author of "Songs by the Wayside," "Wine Other Stories," "The Toiler and

Other Poems," Et CHAPTER XXIII.

TANGLED THREADS. That same morning Dorothy took
Mrs. Atherton out for a walk, but the
former said nothing about the locket or
her conversation with Sister Angela.
She thought it best to wait awhile.
Mrs. Atherton did much talking while
they were out walking, but it cost her
quite an effort to do so. Her memory
seemed very bad; she could not summon up the words as quickly as she
would have liked.
"You've been so good to me," she

"You've been so good to me," she said to Dorothy. "Pray tell me who

said to Dorothy. "Pray tell me who you are?"

Thereupon Dorothy related how she had come across her in the Refuge down in the slums, and of her removal to St. Mary's where a wonderful operation had been performed upon her. It all seemed like a dream to the poor woman. She was surprised, dazed and could not collect her thoughts. The past two years were enigmas she could not solve. She could not recall a thing that had happened. Her mind was a blank. happened. Her mind was a blank. There was a missing link somewhere be-tween the Past and Present. Her

ory could not supply it. b. Mary's Hospital! St. Mary's -," she turned the words over and over again in her mind and for some time tried to recall memories that knocked

tried to recall memories that knocked at her heart's door. The sound of the word was familiar to her.

She raised her eyes to the imposing edifice beyond the green stretch of lawn and exclaimed: "Then that's St. Mary's—let me see!" And she turned about and took in the surroundings. "I have it at last," she said. "Why, to be sure, I'm in Bill—in Bill—" She could not finish the word and Dorothy came to her rescue.

came to her rescue.
"Is it Billington?" she asked.
"Ah yes—Billington, that's the word.
Why, this used to be my old home."
There was no doubt in Dorothy's mind now that the woman beside her was no other than Mrs. Atherton. A new-born joy filled her womanly heart.

For the first time in many months

Mrs. Atherton knew where she was But how she happened to reach Billing ton was a puzzle to her—a puzzle which even later she could not solve. Dorothy was satisfied with her pro

process that afternoon. Before she left the hospital she looked up Sister Angela and told her about the new discoveries. "I am afraid, Sister, I shall have to resort to Sherlock Holmes's tactics to keep all this away from Charles' ears and ever I want to survise him you

and eyes. I want to surprise him yo know very soon."
"Yes, Dorothy," interrupted Sister

Angela, "a bird whispered to me the other day that wedding bells were to ring some time in August for two people I know very well."

"You little dear!" ejaculated Doro-

thy. "Who ever told you that?"
"Ah, my girl, I know all about it.
Your mother was here to see me the
other day and told me."
"I'm afraid I shall have to give mother

a good scolding. But then she didn't know I wanted to surprise you. Yes Sister, Charles and I expect to be married the latter part of August, and I intend to keep this Mrs. Atherton surprise for him until then. What do

say?"
It will be glorious, Dorothy. Just think how Charles will feel, when the patient upon whom he performed such a wonderful operation turns out to be his

good friend, Mrs. Atherton, whom he has thought dead all these years."

"But I am so afraid, Sister, the cat will out of the bag long before the expected time and then all our plans will come to naught. Whatever can we do to prevent Mrs. Atherton and Charles from meeting in the meantime?"
"I heard the doctor saying he wa

going to take a holiday soon—a couple of months I think he said. Couldn't you manage to get him off as quickly a possible? With Mrs. Atherton be tween ourselves we could manage nice ly, I think.

same evening Dr. Mathers dropped in to see Dorothy. They were seated in the drawing room and soon Mrs. Fairfax joined them. After some preliminary conversation Dr. Mathers said: "I think I shall take a holiday one of these days, perhaps in a month—the beginning of June. I am just —the beginning of June. I about at the end of the tether."

"Yes, I am afraid, Charles, you are forgetting the laws of the conservation

forgetting the laws of the conservation of energy," said Mrs. Fairfax.

"You must get away," interrupted Dorothy, "You are not well at all. Only to-day I heard at the hospital that you should lay off for a rest. But what is a month for you dear? You should have at least two, and, May being an especially delightful month full of that comfort and restfulness which you need comfort and restfulness which you need badly, why not go as soon as possible?"
"That's good advice, Dorothy. I think it will be better to take a longer belidar."

Dorothy smiled. She felt sure nov that the Atherton mystery would re-main undiscovered as far as Charles

was concerned. "I am so situated now that I can easily go away. My patients are all off my hands so there is really nothing to keep me except you, my sweet." And he smiled good-naturedly. "I think I'll pack up and leave to-morrow for there is little knowing when something

will turn up to keep me at home."
"I don't care how long you stay,
Charles," Dorothy continued with a smile, "so long as you are back for the twenty-eighth of August. Remember 1 want you to dissect that wedding-cake It's in your line you know, dear." And the three laughed loudly.

Just then Mr. Fairfax entered the "My! that laughter was enough e the dead," he exclaimed as he

greeted them.
"Well, my girl, how is that stranger
getting on up at St. Mary's? Did you
getting on up at St. Mary's?

"Very well, father. We went for a walk. She enjoyed it immensely. But of course, her mind is still clouded." "That was a wonderful case," the old

man said. "It speaks volumes for you, Charles. The whole city has heard of

The doctor lowered his eyes. He was an humble man and did not like fine

compliments.
"The credit's not mine, Mr. Fairfax," "The credit's not mine, Mr. Fairnay, he exclaimed. "It was the good nursing pulled her through. But she did remarkably well. Her eyesight and arm are better, and I really think in time her mind will clear up and then she will be able to tell us all about herself. At present we are perfectly at sea as to who she is and where she came from. I have not seen her for a long time, but Sister Angela gives me good reports."

Dorothy felt elated that Charles was

going on the early morning train. This prevented him from dropping in at St. Mary's before leaving. Now that Mrs. Atherton knew she was in Billington the only natural thing for her to do was to ask all manner of questions. Dorothy wanted to make sure that Dr. Charles would not be the person to answer some of them. She wanted him hundreds of of them. She wanted him h miles away for a little while.

The following day Dorothy called again at St. Mary's.

"Good-morning, Mrs. Atherton!"

"Good morning, Miss Fair—, Miss Fair—fax!" answered the patient. She had remembered the name. "My memory is getting better you see. I remembered your series."

"Don't call me Miss after this. Call me Dorothy, I like it better. I brought you some violets, Mrs. Atherton. They are just fresh from the florist's. ren't they lovely? They are beautiful, Dorothy, I cannot

"Because I have learned to love you,"

the girl answered. Dorothy could not help noticing how indeed improved her mental condition. indeed improved her mental condition. Now and then she would halt in the midst of a conversation, her eyes would wander, but it would only be for a second. Dorothy could not silence the woman's tongue. Now that Mrs. Atherton was returning to her right senses she had so much to say and so many questions to see

tions to ask. "Do you know," she continued, "ever since yesterday my mind seems to be clearing fast. Now that I know I am in clearing fast. Billington, I am not puzzled so much. But the last few years is all chaos and darkness to me. The last I remember ! darkness to me. The last I remember I was in Beresvale," she continued. "It was a morning just like this, and I was sitting under the pine trees listening to the birds, but there the past ends. I don't know how I drifted to Billington

and never shall. "You said yesterday that Billington was your home," remarked Dorothy, as she looked at the gray-haired woman

she looked at the gray-naired woman before her. "> "Ah yes, child," she answered with a thrill of emotion. Just then a tear trickled down her cheek. "I lived here for many years. But then 'tis a long story. I shall tell it all to you some day. The incidents are coming back to me daily. Soon I shall have all the threads strung together again."

Then her thoughts drifted to her

attending surgeon.
"My doctor has not been here to see me for a long time now. If I was really as sick as you say I was, then he must have done wonders for me. How shall I ever repay him? Do you know I never asked him his name. He is a stranger to me, but then I have been away from Billington so long. I believe he never even asked me my name."

"You were too sick to tell him. Believe me or were too sick to tell him.

lieve me you were only able to tell us your name several days ago. And it is nearly a year and a half since the operation."

The woman looked strangely into the girl's eyes. She simply could not understand it at all. It seemed as if she had had a long sleep and was jus

now waking.
"By the way, Dorothy," Mrs. Atherton began, somswhat excitedly, "is there a Dr. Charles Mathers still practicing in the city? I knew him very well once—but it is a long long story and—"
"Oh, do tell me, Mrs. Atherton!"

"Oh, do tell Dorothy pleaded. whereon she had been building. It was
Mrs. Atherton. She knew it. She felt
it, and her heart beat violently. It was the most exciting moment she had ever

experienced. Do tell me the story!" she cried as the room fairly swam before her eyes as the room fairly swam before her eyes.
"Tell me the story! I shall listen to
every syllable. Dr. Mathers still resides in Billington. He is one of the
greatest men in the city to-day."
She did not like to say "surgeon."
She was afraid the word might carry
the ways afraid the word might carry

the woman's thoughts to the man who had so often stood at her bedside. 'Has he done well ?" sighed the poo

Very well, indeed," was the answer "Thank God! I'm glad to hear it

"But, pray, tell me the story! Does it concern Dr. Mathers ?' "Yes, it concerns both of us," she added with a sigh.

added with a sigh.

Then the tears came to her and, while they were falling fast, Mrs. Atherton told the story of her whole life, just as it has been related in these pages—her leaving Billington, and her going to Beresvale, and her bitter hours of struggle in that place.

When she had finished, Dorothy was also in tears. She had listened a thon-

also in tears. She had listened a thousand times to a similar story that came from her flancee's lips.

"Oh, I'm so glad to be back in Billingon, I m so grad to be back in Billing-ton again," sighed Mrs. Atherton.

That afternoon Dorothy looked up Sister Angela before leaving the hos-pital. The news was too good to keep.

"You have straightened out the tangled threads at last," the gentle nun said to her, as they walked together down the paved walk that led from old St. Mary's,

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN GOD'S GOOD TIME. It was not until some days had passed that Dorothy again called at St. Mary's and asked for Mrs. Atherton, having in the meantime instructed Sister Angela to keep good watch over the meaning to keep good watch over the meaning of the meaning to keep good watch over the meaning to keep good watch over the meaning of the meaning that was a state of t

patient.

"By all means keep the people out of her room," she said, "and don't let Father Salvini, should he return, in to see her. She asked me about him yesterday; they were old friends you know, and it did seem so good to be able to tell her that he was out of the city for a few weeks."

"Yes," replied the nun, "if she should tell him her name that would settle the whole matter. I know you are quite anxious to surprise him also."

The day Dorothy called for Mrs. Atherton she came for the express purpose of taking her down town for a walk. Now that the latter knew she was back in Billington again she felt quite keen to get a glimpse of the pleasant streets she once loved so dearly.

They walked on slowly; there was so much for Mrs. Atherton to see. When they had walked several blocks Dorothy could not contain herself any longer. There was something she wanted to tell Mrs. Atherton, and the sooner the bet-

At last she summoned up courage and relained somewhat nervously: "Mrs. At last she summoned up courage and exclaimed, somewhat nervously: "Mrs. Atherton, I have a great surprise in store for you, and I simply cannot keep the secret any longer."

"Surprise for me?" questioned the woman eagerly. "I hope it is good news."

Very. You will be grateful I know.

"The other day you remember asking me about Dr. Mathers?"

"Yes, 1 do."
"Well, you will be surprised no doubt to learn that the man who stood at your bedside many a day in the past—the man who performed the skillful operation that saved your life is no other "Charles Mathers," interrupted Mrs.

Atherton, greatly agitated. She had almost expected it, but yet she hesitated. She could not believe it. It was all s very sudden. For a moment she grew dizzy and almost fell to the ground, but her companion held her in her arms.
"Yes," answered Dorothy, "he is the

"I can hardly believe it, Dorothy," gasped the woman. "It all seems so strange, and yet it can easily be true. It is years and years since last I saw It is years and years since last I saw Charles, and it is only right to think that time has so changed him that I could never have hoped to recognize him. And then, he would never know me in my white hair. I am a different looking woman now. But how did I happen to fall into his hands?"

"In this way. I savne at a concept.

"In this way. I sang at a concerdown in the slums. It was arranged by Father Salvini. Charles accompanied me to the place. You know we're en-

You're engaged to marry Charles? uttered Mrs. Atherton, in surprise. This was the second bit of news Dorothy had kept for her, and it was almost too muc or the poor woman.

"It all sounds like a fairy tale," sh aid, "to think that I should come to Billington, and that the boy, dearest to my heart, should save my life, and I not know him at all! God's ways are wo derful, Dorothy. Oh, I'm so glad you are his betrothed, my darling. I never could understand why you should have taken such an interest in me, but now I see it all."

Mrs. Atherton was greatly interested

Mrs. Atherton was greatly interested in the girl's story.

"I met Charles after my return from Leipzig. It was love at first sight almost. You know, Mrs. Atherton, the wedding-day is drawing very near."

"Is it really? Then I shall be in time for the wedding. It's glorious! glorious! After all God has been kind to me and everything will seep he med wight in

His own good time."

In this moment of joy Mrs. Atherton took Dorothy by the hand and shook it

rigorously.
"Charles is away now." Dorothy

went on. "I sent him off on purpose.
I did not want him to meet you lest he might learn who you were. You see, that locket you gave Sister Angela gave me the first clue as to your identity. Step by step I followed it up until you told me you were Mrs. Atherton. Then I was positive that you were the woman whom Charles had been looking for all Our wedding-day was dray ing near, and I thought of arranging surprise for Charles on this occasion. did not want the matter to leak out so l contrived to get him away from Billing-

on for a two months' holiday.' "You sly fox!" exclaimed Mrs. Atherton with a smile as they walked

"Charles you know believes you dea Mrs. Atherton. Hardly a week passe but that I hear him mention your name He often speaks of his debt to you—the money that is still coming to you."

"The dear boy!"

' Now I want you to cover up you Now I want you to cover up your identity for another few weeks," Dorothy continued, earnestly. "Tell your name to no one. Pretend that you do not remember it. If you meet any of your old friend, at the continue of the cont friends whom you recognize, pass then by as so many strangers. It will not be for long. We will be married on the by as so many strangers. It will not be for long. We will be married on the twenty-eight of August, and on that day at the wedding-breakfast I intend bring-ing an end to all this hiding aud mys-tery. Don't you think it will be a pleas-ant climax to all these restless years of waiting? Father Salvini will be there and mother and father and other old friends of yours. Picture their surprise!' And she laughed girlishly.

"Then you have not even let you mother and father into the secret." "I have told no one save Siste Angela, and her lips are sealed. has a heart of gold.

has a heart of gold."
"I promise you, Dorothy, I shall take
all the precautions necessary to keep
my affairs past and present to myself.
But really, now that I know it all, I can hardly wait until the time arrives. Of course, I'm to have a seat of honor at

the ceremony in Church—eh?"
"Certainly, and at the wedding-break fast as well. I am going to hide you in a room upstairs until the crises arrives and then I shall come for you and lead you into the room and introduce you as one newly risen from the dead. And best of all, you will have to come and remain with us for the remainder of your days. With you back, believe me, it will be heaven for Charles."

The two walked on slowly. The sur-

was just then iving for Dorothy, Charles and herself and, in her mind, could not help picturing the happy meeting which Dorothy had arranged so cleverly. As for thelpast, she left those vast, dark, gloomy areas behind—never to set foot upon them again. She lived now in the living Present has thought upon please. living Present, her thoughts upon pleas-ant ways, redelent with rose-perfume, bright with sunshine and musical with

the song of birds.

In passing Mrs. Atherton recognized In passing Mrs. Atherton recognized familiar faces, all grown older since she had last looked upon them. But no one seemed to know her. The past had dealt too severely with her.

"Come, let us drop into mother's," Dorothy said lightly as they neared the Fairfax mansion. "She will be glad to see year."

"And I, too, shall be happy to look

upon my old friend again and press he "Here! here!" exclaimed Dorothy,

ting your promise. You must—"
"Oh. yes, I'm to act the stranger—
cold, cheerless, heartless—half-witted almost forgot. "You must forget that you are Mrs.

Atherton, that is all."
Dr. Mathers arrived home the last day of July, much benefited by his trip. The first patient he visited was Mrs. Atherton. He was interested in he

The patient came to meet him as he

entered the room. Mrs. Atherton—poor little woman—felt like rushing up to him and putting her arms about his manly neck and crying out her heart for very joy. She looked him up and down for a few minutes. She could not help it. Presently she noticed in his face resemblance to the Charles she had known long ago. She felt like cry ng out to him: "Charles! Charles am Mrs. Atherton. Come to my arms! it was cruel of me to leave you, but I chought it all for the best."

Instantly her thoughts stole to Doro-thy and she thought of her promise, and the words she would have spoken froze

to herself. The time is near at hand and then my heart will be satisfied." "I am glad to welcome you back, doctor, after your trip," she exclaimed nerv-ously. "You look better since I saw ously. "you last."

"Is your mind clearing up faster "Somewhat, thanks. But the last

few years are a perfect blank to me. I don't know how I happened to reach Billington and what occurred after I got here. They tell me I have been at St. here. They tell me I have been at St. Mary's going on two years now. It all seems like a dream to me. You have been very good to me, doctor. How can ever repay you ?"

"By coming and making your home with me for the remainder of your days. That is all I ask of you. Have you any children? Is your husband living?"

"No, I have not. My husband died years ago," she answered, in trembling I wonder what his next question

will be!" she thought. Mrs. Atherton was playing her part well. So far she had not betrayed her secret. "Then you are free to accept my

"I am. You are very kind, and I shall think it over and let you know definitely in a few weeks. Will that do?" In a few weeks! Just about the time that Dorothy Fairfax was to become the

wife of Dr. Mathers.

Mrs. Atherton kept her word, and, when at the wedding-breakfast she ap peared in person with no less a chaperon than Dorothy, the charming bride her-self and was introduced to the merry guests grouped around, as the long lost benefactress of Charles' early days, the gentle reader can best picture the motion—the intense surprise—the feel-ings of supreme joy that shone through smiles and tears, in the eyes of those, staring for the moment through the

smilax and the orange-blossoms THE END.

A DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

Mrs. Ransom Hill and her son sat on the "back stoop" in the heated dusk; they never used the front porch unless they had company. Both were silent after a long dispute. Suddenly the gate opened and a man's active step was heard coming to the rear of the

house; evidently he was familiar with the habits of the family.

"Anybody at home?" was the cheery hail of a deep bass voice, and Mrs. Hill replied in astonished welcome. "That you, Cousin Philander? Well, don't it beat all? I'm tickled to death: where's

your wife "Oh, Ziny couldn't leave Lucy and the new baby, but she made me come. I thought I couldn't leave my patients, but my boy, Ransom, has been practicing a year and he offered to look after them. He's pretty smart, but the old doctor has plenty that like him best, Is that you, Lucius? Cousin Laurinda get a light, and let me see how you look, I've been gone twenty years."
"La me! Is it that long? Come in

the kitchen an' I'll set you a bite to eat. the kitchen an 111 set you a bite to eat.
Why didn't you write so we could meet
you at the station?" and the hostess
lighted the kerosene lamp.
"I didn't know in time. I got a let-

ter asking me to be color-bearer for the Mexican war veterans in the parade to-morrow and I had to hurry like mad to get here. Now let me take a look at you. Well you've held your own wonderfully. I wouldn't take you to be' upward of forty. I thought you would be worn to a shadow. I've always heard so much about your bad health."

Mrs. Hill sighed. She was meekly conscious as she said: "Yes, Cousin Philander, I've been a terrible sufferer. I can't never count on myself. I'll be as well as I be now an' then I'll be took with the awfullest spells like Grandma Boyd used to have, only if there's any odds mine is worse'n hers was. But my; Philander, you look dreadful rugged,

Atherton's thoughts away from the many persons she passed on the street. She was just then living for Dorothy, Charles rail, and you must be over six feet tall kinds of weather." He turned to look at the young man. "What's the matter with you, Lucius? You are thin as a rail, and you must be over six feet tall Stand straight, my boy! you look as if you'd had a long sickness."

His mother answered: "No, Cousin Philander, he ain't sick, only a little billions at the standard of the standard o

sassaparily for it, an' I guess he's worked too hard fixin' the picnic grounds for 'Independence Day;' you see, there's agoin' to be the biggest celebration the township ever had."

"Independence Day," repeated Dr. Case, "how natural that sounds here. Out in Illinois we only say 'Fourth of July."
"Well; whatever you call it, there's

goin' to be all kinds of doin's. During the war nobody took much heart in keepin' the day, but now peace has come an' the slaves is all free, so the whole township has jined in an' lots of the old inhabitants is comin' back to help. I don't know when I've lotted on a celebration as I have on this one, an' you're surprisin' us this way just puts on the cap sheaf. Now, Cousin Philan-der, set down, an' Lucius an' me'll have a cup of tea with you," for the hostess had bustled from kitchen to pantry

had bustled from kitchen to pantry while keeping up the conversation.

"I don't see that you've lost any of your knack in cooking," said the visitor, "everything is as good as it was the lat time I was here,"

"Well, Cousin Philander, there's a lot in knawin' how even if you hain't.

lot in knowin' how, even if you hain't got much stre'nth; do have another of them tarts. I manage to keep Lucius fed an' clothed an' that's all I want. Oh son, you must get up early and wash off the rockaway an' brush off the cush-You won't need the rockaway," said

Lucius eagerly, "you an' Cousin Phil-ander can go in the new buggy, an' I'll ride in the big waggon with the folks

"What you want to poke yourself up there for," demanded his mother; you ain't on the program."

"Yes, I be," said the son idefiantly.

"I'm a-goin to read the Declaration, the minister's got an awful cold an can't speak above a whisper, so I agreed to take his place." "You ain't a goin' with them folks. You know I'm likely to have one of my

spells after wearin' myself out doin' up your white linen suit an' cookin' all day to git ready." Mrs. Hill's obstinate chin and thin lips showed her determination. "Blame it all !" cried Lucius, desperately—" you needn't overwork. I want you to keep a hired girl, an' I'm ready to put the washin' out an' I asked you to go to the general table an' not

bake nothin'." "Oh, yes, you're dreadful willin' to have me keep some wasteful hussy for you to court right under my nose, an' you know with my weak stumick I can't eat victuals that I ain't used to, you've got to be right with me so if I git took sudden you can take care of me.

" Come, come, Cousin Laurinda, don't come, come, Cousin Laurinaa, aon t be foolish. I'm a doctor and you'll be safe with me; courting is all right; Lucius ought to have a wife and three children by this time; all my children are married. I'd like to 'beau' you around again the way I did thirty years ago 'Independence Day.' I you remember, you were huffy at Ran-som and I was mad at Ziny because they went home from singing school together, so we rode in my buggy and we passed them on the road and Ziny made a face at you? We made up afterward and you and Ransom stood up with me, when we were received. Ziny with me, when we were received. with us, when we was married ; Ziny and have laughed over that day many a

time."
"We're goin' to eat by ourselves, I won't mix with a crowd," said the host-ess, ignoring her cousin's effort at cajolery. "Lucius, you've got to mind me, or you know what'll happen," she began to tremble violently, a red spot burned on each cheek, she threw up her hands and screamed.
"Catch her, Cousin Philander, she's

off in one of them plaguey fits. Oh Lord! what shall I do?" said the fright-

The doctor received the patient in his arms, quietly laid her on the floor and unfastened her belt and collar. "Don't be scared, my boy, I know how to manage her: go into the pantry and fix some mustard draughts to put on her feet. As she seemed unconscious, he followed Lucius, who was working with nervous haste. "Oh, Cousin Philander, don't leave

mother; she might die an' I couldn't forgive myself. I hadn't ought to have crossed her, though she's terrible vokin. " Put more mustard into that paste

Lucius, I want it good and strong. Your mother isn't going to die. I've seen hundreds of such attacks and never knew them to kill the patient, but they often shorten other people's lives." Dr. Case was thinking of Ransom Hill.

who died at 30.
"The best thing you can do when The best thing you can do when she's taken this way is to put her flat on the floor if a bed or lounge isn't handy, to loosen her clothing and let her come to by herself. You stay here while I put the mustard on her feet, then I'll come back to talk to you."

Returning, the doctor found the young man wiping tears from his face.
"Now tell me, Lucius, what brings on

these paroxysms?"
"Is that the name of 'em?" queried the son. "Well, most anythin' that "Is that the name of 'em?" queried the son. "Well, most anythin' that goes agin' the grain; they begun to come on soon after I was born an' father was awful distressed about 'em; he died when I was eight years old. She had a spell that frightened him so that he run to the neighbors barefered in he run to the neighbors barefooted in the snow to get somebody to go for the doctor, he took an awful cold, had lung fever an' only lasted a fortnight—for all I was so llittle, he made me promise to take care of ma an' I've kept my word.

"They didn't come on very often after that till I grew big enough to ask to go round with the other boys an' to stay out till dark, but then she had 'em every few days an' couldn't bear me out and you're as spry as a boy, an' you must be sixty-two. I'm just sixty.

The doctor laughed. "That comes of riding over the Illinois prairies in all' die an' I'd turn around an' come back."

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"You see, she loves me pretty near to death, an' wants to do everythin for me, but she won't let me have no liberty. I've got a middlin' good voice an' I wanted to sing in the choir, but when I left her to go to practice she just went out of one fit into another. She don't want me to git married, an' she's pretty near got the hydrophoby about girls.

mear got the hydrophoby about girls.

"When I come of age thirteen years ago, I had a notion of waitin on Polly Clark, but when she found my wife would have to live with ma, she wouldn't would have been girls that I'd been glad to have married, but ma always upset everythin'.

everythin'.

"Do you remember father's step-brother Henry Meigs? He went to Ioway about the time you moved to Illinois—well his girl, Fidelia, got the Center school, here, an' bein' a stranger she s'posed her Aunt Laurindy would be willin' to board her, so she come right to our house; she's real pretty an' the nicest kind, an' she wanted to ma about the work, but she hadn't been here a week before ma thought we was courtin', an' she had the worst fits courtin', an' she had the worst fits you wersee; I was up four nights with her an' six or seven times she lost her breath so long we thought she was really gone. Cousin Fidelia had to go away; she's

boardin' at the tavern now."

The doctor stole in to look at the patient. "She's quiet," he announced. Lucius, whom does the farm belong

to?"
"It's ma's while she lives; you see father thought she was so weakly she wasn't long for this world, so he wanted her to git all the good out of his pro-perty she could. He set a sight of store by her and thought I'd git it as soon as was able to hand e it."
"You're thirty-four years old, Lucius,

What wages have you had since you

were twenty-one?"
"I hain't had nothin' but my victuals an' clothes an' a dollar or two
of spendin' money once in a
while. I did stan' out for an agreement to pay me somethin' reasonable, but she had a dozen spells inside of a week an' I quit askin' for it; she says I might have patience till she's in her grave an' all she scraped up an' se 'Il be mine.

My lad, Grandma Boyd had this trouble, and she lived to be ninety eight
she'd be living now a hundred and
fifteen years old, if she hadn't fallen fifteen years old, if she hadn't fallen down stairs one night and broken her neek. Your mother will outlast you if things keep on this way. Don't be frightened at her symptoms—she's coming to now; I hear her stir."

Lucius stood in wonderment. "Do you know for certain that these fits won't kill her?"

"I'll stake my medical reputation on

it, my lad; now here's a prescription I want filled for her; go to the drug store at the Center and take your time; I'll look after your mother.' "Good land," cried the son in wrath and chagrin, "has ma made a fool of me all these years?"

"Not only you, but herself—hurry out before she finds you are going," and the doctor walked into the kitchen with glass of water and a spoon as calmly as if he did not hear her groaning and

calling:
"Lucius! Lucius! my feet's burnin'
"Lucius! Lucius! my feet's burnin' up; don't let a dyin' woman suffer so; oh! oh! oh! "I've sent Lucius to get some medi-

the sent Lucius to get some meas-cine for you, Cousin Laurinda; it's only the mustard draughts that you feel; the counter irritation is just what you need, now take this powder."

"I don't b'lieve I can swaller; on dear! you don't know how to wait on

dear! you don't know how to wait on me; you hadn't orter sent that boy away. Oh, my feet, my feet!"

"Down with that powder, Laurinda there, it's gone." "Take off them draughts, Philander. wen't have my feet blistered, I'm going

to that celebration. Your better, but you must keep the nustard on a while, good-humoredly.

"I shan't, nuther," cried the patient. rising hurriedly and jerking off the draughts, she shook out her clothes, and

of her disordered hair. "What'd pretty near skin and bone, an' my back's s sore as a bile." " I wanted to put a stop to your fit as "I wanted to put a stop to your fit as soon as I could, and dropped you in the handiest place; now I want to talk to you while we're by ourselves. What wages have you paid Lucius for the last thirtoen you want to be the property of the place of the last thirtoen you want."

thirteen years?"
"Wages to my own son! He's had reel good clothes an' the best of victuals an

good clothes an' the best of victuals an' washin' an' I've give him spendin' money when he needed it. Oh, oh, I b'lieve I'm taking another spell!"

"Don't you think of it; if you do I'll put a mustard plaster the whole length of your back. Now listen, that boy can sue you in court and get pay and interest too for the time since his majority."

"An' this whole place an' the money in the bank comin' to him when I'm gone in the bank comin' to him when Γm gone an' my time ain't far off, my heart's

about give out an' the way you're treat-in' me 'll finish it !" "See here, my good woman, your boy is a good deal nearer death than you are unless you treat him better: don't you see how narrow his chest is and he stoops and has that cough? He takes after Ransom Hill; you and I are Boyds and none of them die under ninety unless by accident. Let him have some pleas-

ure and marry if he wants to."
"He can marry as soon as the breath's out of my body an' not a minute before; there ain't anybody here fit to keep house for him after the way I've raised him; there's been a lot of silly do - less girls a runnin' after him, but I've kep' him out of their traps."

"How about Cousin Henry Meigs' daughter, Fidelia? I've heard that

she's as smart as chain lightning."
"She's too all-fired smart," answered "She's too all-fired smart," answered Mrs. Hill, forgetting propriety in her anger, "she's going to be the goddess of liberty to-morrow, settin' on the platform with a slew of men an' singin, 'The Star Spangled Banner;' there's more brass in her face 'n there is in my big preservin' kittle. I was a dumb fool to take her in the house — she's been after Lucius full-tilt eyer since "She's too all-fired smart,"

Co hic gaj wa rov she hou ing up far