

wail of an anguished mother—and she had worked so hard, and saved so pitifully, and prayed so earnestly, and hoped so proudly !

So now Murray was going forth. Two or three weeks had passed, intolerable to him because of the still deeper tenderness and still gentler love with which his mother had borne herself to him—and the great resolve had gathered in his heart that, cost what it might, he would go away. Not only away, but far away ! where he could start afresh in the vast regions of the opening West, and begin over again, unknown and unbranded, the life that heretofore had been so fruitless and so frivolous.

“ But what will you do, my son, when you get out there ? ” the mother’s voice was asking, her words choked and trembling as they came. “ You’ll be all alone—and we have no money.”

The youth straightened himself beside the slender form. Coming closer to her he rested his hands upon her shoulders and looked down into the wistful face. Her own hands moved upward till they took the ruddy cheeks between them, her eyes seeming to search his very soul.

“ Mother,” he began, his voice low and tense, every word touched with passion and purpose ; “ I don’t know what I’m going to do, mother—or how I’m going to get on. But I do know this—that I’ll