

The simple fact of the matter is that the man who laid out this town made a big mistake, and, as a result, you can all have your hands full of law-suits if you wish.'

When they came to look into it they found that the same mistake had been made all over the town and what was a peaceful settlement was at once turned into a den of strife. Some of the people rushed right into law; others sat down and talked it over and then, sensibly, divided. Grandfather and Polk came mighty near a law-suit but they both of them concluded that if they went into law that the lawyers would get the land and so they kept out of it. They talked and talked but it was all no use. One day Polk came over to grandfather's house and said he had found a way to settle.

'It's this way,' he said. 'You have got a son and I have got a daughter as will soon be old enough to marry. They shall get married and have the land as well as a hundred acres apiece from us which will make them a good homestead.'

Grandfather saw difficulties in the way but the more he talked it over the more he liked it. Finally, to make a long story short, it was agreed that the land should go to an eldest son of one family that should first marry an eldest daughter of the other. In the meantime they agreed to work the land on shares, each clearing so much per year, working it to the best advantage and then crediting the farm with the profits so that the young couple would have a good start. Then the question of buildings came up and they agreed to each pay twenty dollars a year into a fund for that purpose. The deed was drawn up and signed and clearing was begun on the lot. When they made the settlement they s'posed that it would only last a few years at the outside, but Providence ruled different for Polk's daughter died within a year. Her death was a stunner as old Polk had no other daughters, but only sons, while father hadn't any daughter but only one son, who was my father. Old Polk he felt terrible about it and he even went so far as to get married again but t'was no use; his second wife's children were all sons and there were four of them. All this time that agreement was running on

and eating up so much good work and forty dollars a year without doing anybody any good. My father married and had only one child, which is myself. Caleb Polk, old Polk's eldest son, also married and had two daughters and a son. The eldest daughter, Elizabeth, was a mighty nice looking girl and hadn't there been any property mixed up I would have married her quicker than s'cat. I was courting her long steady like when a lawyer chap from Boston came to Pocohasset and the first thing we knew he was gone and Elizabeth went with him. She didn't trouble to ask her father as she had a pretty good idea what he would say."

"And what happened then?" queried Delancy.

"Caleb swore he'd never see her again and he never did, though it was hard work for him, as he thought a good deal of her. For a while she wrote home, and each letter told as how happy she was, but no answer was never sent, and soon they stopped coming. There was only one more, and that was telling that a son had been born to her. Caleb cursed when he heard it, because as long as the boy lived he would be an eldest son of the house. Then her husband went into politics and made a great name for himself. He died a few years ago."

"And Elizabeth?"

"We haven't heard a word since she wrote telling of the baby. Once in a great while we see her name in a newspaper in the society doings, but that is all."

"And the boy?"

"We don't know whether he is dead or alive. About three years after Elizabeth left I got married, and a good wife I got too. Hezekiah Polk, he married and has got a son, an only son. The courts has decided that being the eldest son of the eldest son, he is entitled to rank as an eldest son of the family. We got that decision given so that young Tom could marry my daughter Phyllis. Meanwhile the property has gone on increasing in value so that now it is, as I told you, the prize farm of the state. I never saw a luckier farm. S'posing the crops are bad all round here they are sure to be good on that farm. We calculate that the