

For the Advocate.

The Twins.

It would be impossible, in a short sketch, to give any idea of the character or appearance of Dinnie Shelly. In person he was tall, with a sort of droop of head and shoulders, large, benevolent, blue eyes, and a very high bald forehead; altogether he had rather a patriarchal appearance. Soon after his arrival in Canada, he had the misfortune of losing his wife—Kittie—a gentle little woman, an affliction which Dinnie, to his dying day, never ceased to deplore, always speaking of her with the greatest reverence as, "The woman that's dead," "Grace be with her." A little girl, Catherine, was the only fruit of this marriage, a shy, loving child, with dark gray eyes, and brown hair lying in rings on a forehead fair as a lily. Dinnie, like most widowers, affirmed that everything was going to "wreck and ruin," without a woman in the house, and accordingly set about finding a second help-mate; but when a man is no longer young, and without much worldly goods to back up his suit, he is not expected to be very fastidious, and so Dinnie was fain to content himself with a widow—a woman every way Kittie's inferior—who had one son, Tom. It was evident from the first that little, delicate, gentle Kitty was no favorite with her stepmother, whose willing slave she became. It was as gall to her to see Dinnie pet the child, or hear him say she was growing like her mother; with all the spite of a petty nature, she would badger and persecute the timid little creature, till Dinnie often threatened, well as he loved her, to give Catherine to some family as their adopted child, but no good home offering, things went on as before. Dinnie's house stood just on the roadside, and the few stony acres stretching in the rear barely yielded a support to the fast increasing family—for "little ones went forth like a flock," and each returning summer saw a board ingeniously placed across the door, for the purpose of imprisoning a tottler just essaying to use his legs. Dinnie was a general favorite, and took a fatherly interest in all the young people of the neighborhood, scolding them heartily if he thought they deserved it, and keeping an eye on them generally. If any of the neighbors were from home of a night, Dinnie would go over unasked and see to things, and "keep the children from playing hurdy," as he phrased it. In winter a job of threshing was always ready for him, and in any hurry of work his presence was indispensable.

The boys made it a rule to assemble and harvest Dinnie's scanty crop, feeling themselves amply repaid by his hearty "long life to you, boys." Just across the road from Dinnie's, was the farm of a Mr. Blair, a wealthy bachelor. This gentleman was often prostrated with attacks of rheumatic gout, yet the farm work went on with the regularity of clock work, for Mr. Blair possessed what the Yankees call faculty, as well as money, and a warm heart, notwithstanding his gruff, crusty manner. Seldom did any one visit him, and he appeared quite satisfied that people should stay away; happy with a book and

The last straw is said to break the camel's back, and Dinnie felt that the last straw had been added to his burden when one day, as he was digging in Mr. Blair's garden, a messenger came to tell him that he had two more mouths to feed—a boy and girl had arrived at the little house by the roadside, and the board had never been taken down at all, as little Johnny was just beginning to walk. Sticking the spade in the soil, he commenced mopping his face with the big blue handkerchief which he always carried in the crown of his hat, and in a crest fallen way took his way homeward. Yes, there they were, sure enough—one in each end of the cradle, presided over by Susy Lucas, a widow neighbor.

"There they are," said Susy, "two as fine children as heart could wish. You ought to be a proud man this day, Dinnie."

"Och, Shusy, one of them would ha' been enough—with a blessing," returned Dinnie, as he sat regarding the new arrivals with a look of resignation.

"And who's to care them, and I killed out and out with the others," complained Mrs. Shelly from behind the bed curtains.

Catherine was hanging delighted over the cradle. To think that any one could be otherwise than pleased, roused her.

"I'll mind them my own self," she said indignantly, "Yes, indeed, I'll take them out with Johnny, and they shan't trouble anyone."

"Well, well, you are a good little thing anyway," said Susy; "go, take Johnny out with you while I get your father's dinner, for fraid he'd maul them and I not lookin'. He's as med up with them as yourself indeed." Katie took up her brother and went over to tell her friend, Mr. Blair, the good news.

"Come in, come in, Kittie," he said, as she stood shyly in the door; "and put that boy down. I wonder you aren't dead, child, lugging that great fellow."

"Oh, I'm not tired at all, Mr. Blair," said Kittie, whose delicately flushed cheeks belied the assertion, "and I'll have to do more than ever now. For what do you think, we have two more babies at our house, a wee boy and girl."

"No, Kittie—well, if that isn't too bad. I'm sure you would be better without them, child. Don't you wish they had staid away."

"Oh, no, indeed, and I'm sorry father and mother don't seem more pleased; but it'll soon be different when they can play like Johnnie here, and I mean to mind them myself; and now may I rub your foot?" and the gentle little woman



SUSY LUCAS PRESENTING THE TWINS TO MR. BLAIR.