

Poor Denham was almost overcome with the rush of conflicting feelings. It was a terrible meeting this, for he could see by his father's joyous aspect and unclouded brow that he as yet knew nothing of the calamity which had befallen his family.

"Denham, my dear boy," he exclaimed, as he leaped from the cutter and affectionately greeted his son, "why I thought to surprise you all at breakfast. I have spent the night at Uncle Henry's, not liking to knock you all up so late last night, for it was late when we arrived. But you are beforehand with me."

Denham had turned his face hastily from his father to hide his choking tears, and was making a feint at tightening a buckle in the grey mare's harness. How should he break the dreadful news? Ichabod spared him the painful task.

"I'm glad to see yer to hum, Holford," he said gravely; "and to tell yer the truth it's time you were, for matters isn't jist all right up there. We're on a grave bit of a job, Holford, and the sooner you know it the better. It's jist no more nor less than that your gal Minnie's missin', and it's been a considerable snowy night for a delicate young critter like her to be out."

He would not tell him any more of the bad-news just then;—that Harry was also with Minnie, that the insurgents had broken into his house, and, as they had every reason to believe, had burnt John Kirkpatrick's farm, were additional evil tidings which