

his wife had promised him for supper would be cold. At any other hour of the day he would have received Ordway with politeness—for he was at heart a well-disposed and even a charitable person—but it happened that his dinner had been unsatisfactory (his mutton had been served half raw by a new maid of all-work) and he had particularly set his hopes upon the delicious light muffins in which his wife excelled. So when he saw Ordway standing between him and his release, his face grew black and the movements of his hands passed to jerks of frantic irritation.

"What do you want? Say it quick—I've no time to talk," he began, as he pushed the last heap of papers inside, and let the lid of his desk fall with a bang.

"I'm looking for work," said Ordway, "and I was told at Baxter's warehouse——"

"Damn Baxter. What kind of work do you want?"

"I'll take anything—I can do bookkeeping or——"

"Well, I don't want a bookkeeper."

He locked his desk, and turning to take down his hat, was incensed further by discovering that it was not on the hook where he had placed it when he came in. Finding it at last on a heap of reports in the corner, he put it on his head and stared at Ordway, with his angry eyes.

"You must have come a long way—have n't you? Mostly on foot?"

"A good distance."

"Why did you select Tappahannock? Was there any reason?"