











THE RUNAWAY.

"Would they put her in the asylum," she wondered, "if they caught her." Folks would surely think she was crazy. She stopped at the stone wall to rest, and looked back timorously at the old familiar scene. Far behind her stretched the meadow, a symphony of olive and green in the late fall. Here and there by a sunken boulder stood solidly golden rod, or berry bushes clothed now in scarlet and gold. At intervals on the long slope stood solitary trees, where fluttering, brittle leaves fell in the gentle chill air. In summer time she remembered well the hay makers rested in the shade, and the jog with ginger water she made for the men was kept there to cool. She seemed, as she stood there, to remember everything. The house was all right, she was sure of that; the key was under the kitchen door mat, the fire was out in the stove, and the cat locked in the barn. She held her work hardened hand to her side, panting a little, for it was a good bit of a walk across the meadow, and she was 89 years old on her last birthday. The cows feeding looked homelike and pleasant. "Good-by, critters," she said, aloud. "meny's the time I've druv ye home an' milked ye, an' Lallus let ye est by the way, nor never hurried ye as the boys do."

He had brought her a cup of coffee at the last station, and had pointed out on the way things he thought might interest her. "To Denver," "Wal, wal; ye're from New England, I'll be bound!" "From Maine," she answered, and then she grew communicative, for she was always a chatty old lady, and she was a relief to tell the story of her weary had possessed her soul in silence so long, and it years of waiting to a kindly listener. "She told him all she relations she had, two grand nephews and their families. That twenty years ago 8 m (for she had brought them up when their parents died of consumption, that kills so many of our folks) went out west. He was always adventurous, and for ten years she did not hear from him; but John was different and steady, and when he came of age she had given him her farm, with the provision she should always have a home, otherwise he would have gone away, too. Well, for five years they were happy, then John married, and his wife had grown to think her a burden as the years went on, and the children when they grew big did not care for her; she felt she had lived too long. "I grew so lonesome," she said pathetically, "it seems I couldn't take up heart to live day by day, an' 'yit I knowed our folks was long lived. Ten years back, when Sam wrote he was a 'sot,' fair an' sent me money, I begun to think of him; for he was alius generous an' kind, an' the gratefullest o'yer an' so I begun to save to go to him, fur I knowed I could work for my board fur a good many years to come. Fur three years he ain't hardly wrote, but I said that to the wild kentry he lived in. I said 'b'ar an' Injuns don't aker me none, fur when I was a gal up in Aroostuk kentry there was plenty of both, an' as fur buffaloes, them 'bored outle don't aker me none, fur I've been used to a farm alius. But the lonesomeness of those medders has sorter upset me an' made me think every day Sam was further off than I ever caaled on."

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ANOTHER STEP TO THE FRONT.

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