LOVE versus LAW.

How many kinds of beauty there are! How many even in the human form! There are the bloom and motion of childhood, the freshness and ripe perfection of youth, the dignity of manhood, the softness of woman--all different, yet each in its kind perfect.

But there is none so peculiar, none that bears more the image of the heavenly, than the beauty of Christian old age. It is like the loveliness of those calm autumn days, when the heats of summer are past, when the harvest is gathered into the garner, and the sun shines over the placid fields and fading woods, which stand waiting for their last change. It is a beauty more strictly moral, more belonging to the soul, than that of any other period of life. Poetic fiction always paints the old man as a Christian; nor is there any period where the virtues of Christianity seem to find a more harmonious development. The aged man, who has outlived the hurry of passion--who has withstood the urgency of temptation--who has concentrated the religious impulses of youth into habits of obedience and love--who, having served his generation by the will of God, now leans in helplessness on Him whom once he served, is, perhaps, one of the most faultless representations of the beauty of holiness that this world affords.

Thoughts something like these arose in my mind as I slowly turned my footsteps from the graveyard of my native village, where I had been wandering after years of absence. It was a lovely spot--a soft slope of ground close by a little stream, that ran sparkling through the cedars and junipers beyond it, while on the other side arose a green hill, with the white village laid like a necklace of pearls upon its bosom.

There is no feature of the landscape more picturesque and peculiar than that of the graveyard--that "city of the silent," as it is beautifully expressed by the Orientals--standing amid the bloom and rejoicing of nature, its white stones glittering in the sun, a memorial of decay, a link between the living and the dead.

As I moved slowly from mound to mound, and read the inscriptions, which purported that many a money-saving man, and many a busy, anxious housewife, and many a prattling, half-blossomed child, had done with care or mirth, I was struck with a plain slab, bearing the inscription, "To the memory of Deacon Enos Dudley, who died in his hundredth year." My eye was caught by this inscription, for in other years I had well known the person it recorded. At this instant, his mild and venerable form arose before me as erst it used to rise from the deacon's seat, a straight, close slip just below the pulpit. I recollect his quiet and lowly coming into meeting, precisely ten minutes before the time, every Sunday,--his tall form a little stooping,--his best suit of butternut-colored Sunday clothes, with long flaps and wide cuffs, on one

of which two pins were always to be seen stuck in with the most reverent precision. When seated, the top of the pew came just to his chin, so that his silvery, placid head rose above it like the moon above the horizon. His head was one that might have been sketched for a St. John--bald at the top, and around the temples adorned with a soft flow of bright fine hair,--

"That down his shoulders reverently spread,
As hoary frost with spangles doth attire
The naked branches of an oak half dead."

He was then of great age, and every line of his patient face seemed to say, "And now, Lord, what wait I for?" Yet still, year after year, was he to be seen in the same place, with the same dutiful punctuality.

The services he offered to his God were all given with the exactness of an ancient Israelite. No words could have persuaded him of the propriety of meditating when the choir was singing, or of sitting down, even through infirmity, before the close of the longest prayer that ever was offered. A mighty contrast was he to his fellow-officer, Deacon Abrams, a tight, little, tripping, well-to-do man, who used to sit beside him with his hair brushed straight up like a little blaze, his coat buttoned up trig and close, his psalm book in hand, and his quick gray eyes turned first on one side of the broad aisle, and then on the other, and then up into the gallery, like a man who came to church on business, and felt responsible for every thing that was going on in the house.

A great hinderance was the business talent of this good little man to the enjoyments of us youngsters, who, perched along in a row on a low seat in front of the pulpit, attempted occasionally to diversify the long hour of sermon by sundry small exercises of our own, such as making our handkerchiefs into rabbits, or exhibiting, in a sly way, the apples and gingerbread we had brought for a Sunday dinner, or pulling the ears of some discreet meeting-going dog, who now and then would soberly pitapat through the broad aisle. But woe be to us during our contraband sports, if we saw Deacon Abrams's sleek head dodging up from behind the top of the deacon's seat. Instantly all the apples, gingerbread, and handkerchiefs vanished, and we all sat with our hands folded, looking as demure as if we understood every word of the sermon, and more too.

There was a great contrast between these two deacons in their services and prayers, when, as was often the case, the absence of the pastor devolved on them the burden of conducting the duties of the sanctuary. That God was great and good, and that we all were sinners, were truths that seemed to have melted into the heart of Deacon Enos, so that his very soul and spirit were bowed down with them. With Deacon Abrams it was an undisputed fact, which he had settled long ago, and concerning which he felt that there could be no reasonable doubt, and his bustling way of dealing with the matter seemed to say that he knew that and a great many things besides.

Deacon Enos was known far and near as a very proverb for peacefulness of

demeanor and unbounded charitableness in covering and excusing the faults of others. As long as there was any doubt in a case of alleged evil doing, Deacon Enos guessed "the man did not mean any harm, after all;" and when transgression became too barefaced for this excuse, he always guessed "it wa'n't best to say much about it; nobody could tell what they might be left to."

Some incidents in his life will show more clearly these traits. A certain shrewd landholder, by the name of Jones, who was not well reported of in the matter of honesty, sold to Deacon Enos a valuable lot of land, and received the money for it; but, under various pretences, deferred giving the deed. Soon after, he died; and, to the deacon's amazement, the deed was nowhere to be found, while this very lot of land was left by will to one of his daughters.

The deacon said "it was very extraor'nary: he always knew that Seth Jones was considerably sharp about money, but he did not think he would do such a right up-and-down wicked thing." So the old man repaired to 'Squire Abel to state the case, and see if there was any redress. "I kinder hate to tell of it," said he; "but, 'Squire Abel, you know Mr. Jones was--was--what he was, even if he is dead and gone!" This was the nearest approach the old gentleman could make to specifying a heavy charge against the dead. On being told that the case admitted of no redress, Deacon Enos comforted himself with half soliloquizing, "Well, at any rate, the land has gone to those two girls, poor lone critters--I hope it will do them some good. There is Silence--we won't say much

about her; but Sukey is a nice, pretty girl." And so the old man departed, leaving it as his opinion that, since the matter could not be mended, it was just as well not to say any thing about it.

Now, the two girls here mentioned (to wit, Silence and Sukey) were the eldest and the youngest of a numerous, family, the offspring of three wives of Seth Jones, of whom these two were the sole survivors. The elder, Silence, was a tall, strong, black-eyed, hard-featured woman, verging upon forty, with a good, loud, resolute voice, and what the Irishman would call "a dacent notion of using it." Why she was called Silence was a standing problem to the neighborhood; for she had more faculty and inclination for making a noise than any person in the whole township. Miss Silence was one of those persons who have no disposition to yield any of their own rights. She marched up to all controverted matters, faced down all opposition, held her way lustily and with good courage, making men, women, and children turn out for her, as they would for a mail stage. So evident was her innate determination to be free and independent, that, though she was the daughter of a rich man, and well portioned, only one swain was ever heard of who ventured to solicit her hand in marriage; and he was sent off with the assurance that, if he ever showed his face about the house again, she would set the dogs on him.

But Susan Jones was as different from her sister as the little graceful convolvulus from the great rough stick that supports it. At the time of which we speak she was just eighteen; a modest, slender, blushing girl,

as timid and shrinking as her sister was bold and hardy. Indeed, the education of poor Susan had cost Miss Silence much painstaking and trouble, and, after all, she said "the girl would make a fool of herself; she never could teach her to be up and down with people, as she was."

When the report came to Miss Silence's ears that Deacon Enos considered himself as aggrieved by her father's will, she held forth upon the subject with great strength of courage and of lungs. "Deacon Enos might be in better business than in trying to cheat orphans out of their rights--she hoped he would go to law about it, and see what good he would get by it--a pretty church member and deacon, to be sure! getting up such a story about her poor father, dead and gone!"

"But, Silence," said Susan, "Deacon Enos is a good man: I do not think he means to injure any one; there must be some mistake about it."

"Susan, you are a little fool, as I have always told you," replied Silence; "you would be cheated out of your eye teeth if you had not me to take care of you."

But subsequent events brought the affairs of these two damsels in closer connection with those of Deacon Enos, as we shall proceed to show.

It happened that the next door neighbor of Deacon Enos was a certain old farmer, whose crabbedness of demeanor had procured for him the name of

Uncle Jaw. This agreeable surname accorded very well with the general characteristics both of the person and manner of its possessor. He was tall and hard-favored, with an expression of countenance much resembling a north-east rain storm--a drizzling, settled sulkiness, that seemed to defy all prospect of clearing off, and to take comfort in its own disagreeableness. His voice seemed to have taken lessons of his face, in such admirable keeping was its sawing, deliberate growl with the pleasing physiognomy before indicated. By nature he was endowed with one of those active, acute, hair-splitting minds, which can raise forty questions for dispute on any point of the compass; and had he been an educated man, he might have proved as clever a metaphysician as ever threw dust in the eyes of succeeding generations. But being deprived of these advantages, he nevertheless exerted himself to quite as useful a purpose in puzzling and mystifying whomsoever came in his way. But his activity particularly exercised itself in the line of the law, as it was his meat, and drink, and daily meditation, either to find something to go to law about, or to go law about something he had found. There was always some question about an old rail fence that used to run "a leetle more to the left hand," or that was built up "a leetle more to the right hand," and so cut off a strip of his "medder land," or else there was some outrage of Peter Somebody's turkeys getting into his mowing, or Squire Moses's geese were to be shut up in the town pound, or something equally important kept him busy from year's end to year's end. Now, as a matter of private amusement, this might have answered very well; but then Uncle Jaw was not satisfied to fight his own battles, but must needs go from house to house, narrating the whole length and

breadth of the case, with all the says he's and says I's, and the I tell'd him's and he tell'd me's, which do either accompany or flow therefrom. Moreover, he had such a marvellous facility of finding out matters to quarrel about, and of letting every one else know where they, too, could muster a quarrel, that he generally succeeded in keeping the whole neighborhood by the ears.

And as good Deacon Enos assumed the office of peace-maker for the village, Uncle Jaw's efficiency rendered it no sinecure. The deacon always followed the steps of Uncle Jaw, smoothing, hushing up, and putting matters aright with an assiduity that was truly wonderful.

Uncle Jaw himself had a great respect for the good man, and, in common with all the neighborhood, sought unto him for counsel, though, like other seekers of advice, he appropriated only so much as seemed good in his own eyes.

Still he took a kind of pleasure in dropping in of an evening to Deacon Enos's fire, to recount the various matters which he had taken or was to take in hand; at one time to narrate "how he had been over the milldam, telling old Granny Clark that she could get the law of Seth Scran about that pasture lot," or else "how he had told Ziah Bacon's widow that she had a right to shut up Bill Scranton's pig every time she caught him in front of her house."

But the grand "matter of matters," and the one that took up the most of

Uncle Jaw's spare time, lay in a dispute between him and 'Squire Jones, the father of Susan and Silence; for it so happened that his lands and those of Uncle Jaw were contiguous. Now, the matter of dispute was on this wise: On 'Squire Jones's land there was a mill, which mill Uncle Jaw averred was "always a-flooding his medder land." As Uncle Jaw's "medder land" was by nature half bog and bulrushes, and therefore liable to be found in a wet condition, there was always a happy obscurity as to where the water came from, and whether there was at any time more there than belonged to his share. So, when all other subject matters of dispute failed, Uncle Jaw recreated himself with getting up a lawsuit about his "medder land;" and one of these cases was in pendency when, by the death of the squire, the estate was left to Susan and Silence, his daughters. When, therefore, the report reached him that Deacon Enos had been cheated out of his dues, Uncle Jaw prepared forthwith to go and compare notes. Therefore, one evening, as Deacon Enos was sitting quietly by the fire, musing and reading with his big Bible open before him, he heard the premonitory symptoms of a visitation from Uncle Jaw on his door scraper; and soon the man made his appearance. After seating himself directly in front of the fire, with his elbows on his knees, and his hands spread out over the coals, he looked up in Deacon Enos's mild face with his little inquisitive gray eyes, and remarked, by way of opening the subject, "Well, deacon, old 'Squire Jones is gone at last. I wonder how much good all his land will do him now?"

"Yes," replied Deacon Enos, "it just shows how all these things are not worth striving after. We brought nothing into the world, and it is

certain we can carry nothing out."

"Why, yes," replied Uncle Jaw, "that's all very right, deacon; but it was strange how that old 'Squire Jones did hang on to things. Now, that mill of his, that was always soaking off water into these medders of mine--I took and tell'd 'Squire Jones just how it was, pretty nigh twenty times, and yet he would keep it just so; and now he's dead and gone, there is that old gal Silence is full as bad, and makes more noise; and she and Suke have got the land; but, you see, I mean to work it yet."

Here Uncle Jaw paused to see whether he had produced any sympathetic excitement in Deacon Enos; but the old man sat without the least emotion, quietly contemplating the top of the long kitchen shovel. Uncle Jaw fidgeted in his chair, and changed his mode of attack for one more direct. "I heard 'em tell, Deacon Enos, that the squire served you something of an unhandy sort of trick about that 'ere lot of land."

Still Deacon Enos made no reply; but Uncle Jaw's perseverance was not so to be put off, and he recommenced. "'Squire Abel, you see, he tell'd me how the matter was, and he said he did not see as it could be mended; but I took and tell'd him, ''Squire Abel,' says I, 'I'd bet pretty nigh 'most any thing, if Deacon Enos would tell the matter to me, that I could find a hole for him to creep out at; for,' says I, 'I've seen daylight through more twistical cases than that afore now.'"

Still Deacon Enos remained mute; and Uncle Jaw, after waiting a while, recommenced with, "But, railly, deacon, I should like to hear the particulars."

"I have made up my mind not to say any thing more about that business," said Deacon Enos, in a tone which, though mild, was so exceedingly definite, that Uncle Jaw felt that the case was hopeless in that quarter; he therefore betook himself to the statement of his own grievances.

"Why, you see, deacon," he began, at the same time taking the tongs, and picking up all the little brands, and disposing them in the middle of the fire,--"you see, two days arter the funeral, (for I didn't railly like to go any sooner,) I stepped up to hash over the matter with old Silence; for as to Sukey, she ha'n't no more to do with such things than our white kitten. Now, you see, 'Squire Jones, just afore he died, he took away an old rail fence of his'n that lay between his land and mine, and began to build a new stone wall; and when I come to measure, I found he had took and put a'most the whole width of the stone wall on to my land, when there ought not to have been more than half of it come there. Now, you see, I could not say a word to 'Squire Jones, because, jest before I found it out, he took and died; and so I thought I'd speak to old Silence, and see if she meant to do any thing about it, 'cause I knew pretty well she wouldn't; and I tell you, if she didn't put it on to me! We had a regular pitched battle--the old gal, I thought she would 'a screamed herself to death! I don't know but she would, but just then

poor Sukey came in, and looked so frightened and scarey--Sukey is a pretty gal, and looks so trembling and delicate, that it's kinder a shame to plague her, and so I took and come away for that time."

Here Uncle Jaw perceived a brightening in the face of the good deacon, and felt exceedingly comforted that at last he was about to interest him in his story.

But all this while the deacon had been in a profound meditation concerning the ways and means of putting a stop to a quarrel that had been his torment from time immemorial, and just at this moment a plan had struck his mind which our story will proceed to unfold.

The mode of settling differences which had occurred to the good man was one which has been considered a specific in reconciling contending sovereigns and states from early antiquity, and the deacon hoped it might have a pacifying influence even in so unpromising a case as that of Miss Silence and Uncle Jaw.

In former days, Deacon Enos had kept the district school for several successive winters, and among his scholars was the gentle Susan Jones, then a plump, rosy little girl, with blue eyes, curly hair, and the sweetest disposition in the world. There was also little Joseph Adams, the only son of Uncle Jaw, a fine, healthy, robust boy, who used to spell the longest words, make the best snowballs and poplar whistles, and read the loudest and fastest in the Columbian Orator of any boy at

school.

Little Joe inherited all his father's sharpness, with a double share of good humor; so that, though he was forever effervescing in the way of one funny trick or another, he was a universal favorite, not only with the deacon, but with the whole school.

Master Joseph always took little Susan Jones under his especial protection, drew her to school on his sled, helped her out with all the long sums in her arithmetic, saw to it that nobody pillaged her dinner basket, or knocked down her bonnet, and resolutely whipped or snowballed any other boy who attempted the same gallantries. Years passed on, and Uncle Jaw had sent his son to college. He sent him because, as he said, he had "a right to send him; just as good a right as 'Squire Abel or Deacon Abrams to send their boys, and so he would send him." It was the remembrance of his old favorite Joseph, and his little pet Susan, that came across the mind of Deacon Enos, and which seemed to open a gleam of light in regard to the future. So, when Uncle Jaw had finished his prelection, the deacon, after some meditation, came out with, "Railly, they say that your son is going to have the valedictory in college."

Though somewhat startled at the abrupt transition, Uncle Jaw found the suggestion too flattering to his pride to be dropped; so, with a countenance grimly expressive of his satisfaction, he replied, "Why, yes--yes--I don't see no reason why a poor man's son ha'n't as much

right as any one to be at the top, if he can get there."

"Just so," replied Deacon Enos.

"He was always the boy for larning, and for nothing else," continued Uncle Jaw; "put him to farming, couldn't make nothing of him. If I set him to hoeing corn or hilling potatoes, I'd always find him stopping to chase hop-toads, or off after chip-squirrels. But set him down to a book, and there he was! That boy larnt reading the quickest of any boy that ever I saw: it wasn't a month after he began his a b, abs, before he could read in the 'Fox and the Brambles,' and in a month more he could clatter off his chapter in the Testament as fast as any of them; and you see, in college, it's jest so--he has ris right up to be first."

"And he is coming home week after next," said the deacon, meditatively.

The next morning, as Deacon Enos was eating his breakfast, he quietly remarked to his wife, "Sally, I believe it was week after next you were meaning to have your quilting?"

"Why, I never told you so: what alive makes you think that, Deacon Dudley?"

"I thought that was your calculation," said the good man, quietly.

"Why, no; to be sure, I can have it, and may be it's the best of any time, if we can get Black Dinah to come and help about the cakes and pies. I guess we will, finally."

"I think it's likely you had better," replied the deacon, "and we will have all the young folks here."

And now let us pass over all the intermediate pounding, and grinding, and chopping, which for the next week foretold approaching festivity in the kitchen of the deacon. Let us forbear to provoke the appetite of a hungry reader by setting in order before him the minced pies, the cranberry tarts, the pumpkin pies, the doughnuts, the cookies, and other sweet cakes of every description, that sprang into being at the magic touch of Black Dinah, the village priestess on all these solemnities. Suffice it to say that the day had arrived, and the auspicious quilt was spread.

The invitation had not failed to include the Misses Silence and Susan Jones--nay, the good deacon had pressed gallantry into the matter so far as to be the bearer of the message himself; for which he was duly rewarded by a broadside from Miss Silence, giving him what she termed a piece of her mind in the matter of the rights of widows and orphans; to all which the good old man listened with great benignity from the beginning to the end, and replied with,--

"Well, well, Miss Silence, I expect you will think better of this before

long; there had best not be any hard words about it." So saying, he took up his hat and walked off, while Miss Silence, who felt extremely relieved by having blown off steam, declared that "it was of no more use to hector old Deacon Enos than to fire a gun at a bag of cotton wool. For all that, though, she shouldn't go to the quilting; nor, more, should Susan."

"But, sister, why not?" said the little maiden; "I think I shall go." And Susan said this in a tone so mildly positive that Silence was amazed.

"What upon 'arth ails you, Susan?" said she, opening her eyes with astonishment; "haven't you any more spirit than to go to Deacon Enos's when he is doing all he can to ruin us?"

"I like Deacon Enos," replied Susan; "he was always kind to me when I was a little girl, and I am not going to believe that he is a bad man now."

When a young lady states that she is not going to believe a thing, good judges of human nature generally give up the case; but Miss Silence, to whom the language of opposition and argument was entirely new, could scarcely give her ears credit for veracity in the case; she therefore repeated over exactly what she said before, only in a much louder tone of voice, and with much more vehement forms of asseveration--a mode of reasoning which, if not strictly logical, has at least the sanction of

very respectable authorities among the enlightened and learned.

"Silence," replied Susan, when the storm had spent itself, "if it did not look like being angry with Deacon Enos, I would stay away to oblige you; but it would seem to every one to be taking sides in a quarrel, and I never did, and never will, have any part or lot in such things."

"Then you'll just be trod and trampled on all your days, Susan," replied Silence; "but, however, if you choose to make a fool of yourself, I don't;" and so saying, she flounced out of the room in great wrath. It so happened, however, that Miss Silence was one of those who have so little economy in disposing of a fit of anger, that it was all used up before the time of execution arrived. It followed of consequence, that, having unburdened her mind freely both to Deacon Enos and to Susan, she began to feel very much more comfortable and good-natured; and consequent upon that came divers reflections upon the many gossiping opportunities and comforts of a quilting; and then the intrusive little reflection, "What if she should go, after all; what harm would be done?" and then the inquiry, "Whether it was not her duty to go and look after Susan, poor child, who had no mother to watch over her?" In short, before the time of preparation arrived, Miss Silence had fully worked herself up to the magnanimous determination of going to the quilting. Accordingly, the next day, while Susan was standing before her mirror, braiding up her pretty hair, she was startled by the apparition of Miss Silence coming into the room as stiff as a changeable silk and a high horn comb could make her; and "grimly determined was her look."

"Well, Susan," said she, "if you will go to the quilting this afternoon, I think it is my duty to go and see to you."

What would people do if this convenient shelter of duty did not afford them a retreat in cases when they are disposed to change their minds? Susan suppressed the arch smile that, in spite of herself, laughed out at the corners of her eyes, and told her sister that she was much obliged to her for her care. So off they went together.

Silence in the mean time held forth largely on the importance of standing up for one's rights, and not letting one's self be trampled on.

The afternoon passed on, the elderly ladies quilted and talked scandal, and the younger ones discussed the merits of the various beaux who were expected to give vivacity to the evening entertainment. Among these the newly-arrived Joseph Adams, just from college, with all his literary honors thick about him, became a prominent subject of conversation.

It was duly canvassed whether the young gentleman might be called handsome, and the affirmative was carried by a large majority, although there were some variations and exceptions; one of the party declaring his whiskers to be in too high a state of cultivation, another maintaining that they were in the exact line of beauty, while a third vigorously disputed the point whether he wore whiskers at all. It was allowed by all, however, that he had been a great beau in the town where

he had passed his college days. It was also inquired into whether he were matrimonially engaged; and the negative being understood, they diverted themselves with predicting to one another the capture of such a prize; each prophecy being received with such disclaimers as "Come now!" "Do be still!" "Hush your nonsense!" and the like.

At length the long-wished-for hour arrived, and one by one the lords of the creation began to make their appearance; and one of the last was this much admired youth.

"That is Joe Adams!" "That is he!" was the busy whisper, as a tall, well-looking young man came into the room, with the easy air of one who had seen several things before, and was not to be abashed by the combined blaze of all the village beauties.

In truth, our friend Joseph had made the most of his residence in N., paying his court no less to the Graces than the Muses. His fine person, his frank, manly air, his ready conversation, and his faculty of universal adaptation had made his society much coveted among the beau monde of N.; and though the place was small, he had become familiar with much good society.

We hardly know whether we may venture to tell our fair readers the whole truth in regard to our hero. We will merely hint, in the gentlest manner in the world, that Mr. Joseph Adams, being undeniably first in the classics and first in the drawing room, having been gravely commended in

his class by his venerable president, and gayly flattered in the drawing room by the elegant Miss This and Miss That, was rather inclining to the opinion that he was an uncommonly fine fellow, and even had the assurance to think that, under present circumstances, he could please without making any great effort--a thing which, however true it were in point of fact, is obviously improper to be thought of by a young man. Be that as it may, he moved about from one to another, shaking hands with all the old ladies, and listening with the greatest affability to the various comments on his growth and personal appearance, his points of resemblance to his father, mother, grandfather, and grandmother, which are always detected by the superior acumen of elderly females.

Among the younger ones, he at once, and with full frankness, recognized old schoolmates, and partners in various whortleberry, chestnut, and strawberry excursions, and thus called out an abundant flow of conversation. Nevertheless, his eye wandered occasionally around the room, as if in search of something not there. What could it be? It kindled, however, with an expression of sudden brightness as he perceived the tall and spare figure of Miss Silence; whether owing to the personal fascinations of that lady, or to other causes, we leave the reader to determine.

Miss Silence had predetermined never to speak a word again to Uncle Jaw or any of his race; but she was taken by surprise at the frank, extended hand and friendly "how d'ye do?" It was not in woman to resist so cordial an address from a handsome young man, and Miss Silence gave her

hand, and replied with a graciousness that amazed herself. At this moment, also, certain soft blue eyes peeped forth from a corner, just "to see if he looked as he used to." Yes, there he was! the same dark, mirthful eyes that used to peer on her from behind the corners of the spelling book at the district school; and Susan Jones gave a deep sigh to those times, and then wondered why she happened to think of such nonsense.

"How is your sister, little Miss Susan?" said Joseph.

"Why, she is here--have you not seen her?" said Silence; "there she is, in that corner."

Joseph looked, but could scarcely recognize her. There stood a tall, slender, blooming girl, that might have been selected as a specimen of that union of perfect health with delicate fairness so characteristic of the young New England beauty.

She was engaged in telling some merry story to a knot of young girls, and the rich color that, like a bright spirit, constantly went and came in her cheeks; the dimples, quick and varying as those of a little brook; the clear, mild eye; the clustering curls, and, above all, the happy, rejoicing smile, and the transparent frankness and simplicity of expression which beamed like sunshine about her, all formed a combination of charms that took our hero quite by surprise; and when Silence, who had a remarkable degree of directness in all her dealings,

called out, "Here, Susan, is Joe Adams, inquiring after you!" our practised young gentleman felt himself color to the roots of his hair, and for a moment he could scarce recollect that first rudiment of manners, "to make his bow like a good boy." Susan colored also; but, perceiving the confusion of our hero, her countenance assumed an expression of mischievous drollery, which, helped on by the titter of her companions, added not a little to his confusion.

"Dense take it!" thought he, "what's the matter with me?" and, calling up his courage, he dashed into the formidable circle of fair ones, and began chattering with one and another, calling by name with or without introduction, remembering things that never happened, with a freedom that was perfectly fascinating.

"Really, how handsome he has grown!" thought Susan; and she colored deeply when once or twice the dark eyes of our hero made the same observation with regard to herself, in that quick, intelligible dialect which eyes alone can speak. And when the little party dispersed, as they did very punctually at nine o'clock, our hero requested of Miss Silence the honor of attending her home--an evidence of discriminating taste which materially raised him in the estimation of that lady. It was true, to be sure, that Susan walked on the other side of him, her little white hand just within his arm; and there was something in that light touch that puzzled him unaccountably, as might be inferred from the frequency with which Miss Silence was obliged to bring up the ends of conversation with, "What did you say?" "What were you going to say?" and other

persevering forms of inquiry, with which a regular-trained matter-of-fact talker will hunt down a poor fellow-mortal who is in danger of sinking into a comfortable revery.

When they parted at the gate, however, Silence gave our hero a hearty invitation to "come and see them any time," which he mentally regarded as more to the point than any thing else that had been said.

As Joseph soberly retraced his way homeward, his thoughts, by some unaccountable association, began to revert to such topics as the loneliness of man by himself, the need of kindred spirits, the solaces of sympathy, and other like matters.

That night Joseph dreamed of trotting along with his dinner basket to the old brown school house, and vainly endeavoring to overtake Susan Jones, whom he saw with her little pasteboard sun bonnet a few yards in front of him; then he was teetering with her on a long board, her bright little face glancing up and down, while every curl around it seemed to be living with delight; and then he was snowballing Tom Williams for knocking down Susan's doll's house, or he sat by her on a bench, helping her out with a long sum in arithmetic; but, with the mischievous fatality of dreams, the more he ciphered and expounded, the longer and more hopeless grew the sum; and he awoke in the morning pshawing at his ill luck, after having done a sum over half a dozen times, while Susan seemed to be looking on with the same air of arch drollery that he saw on her face the evening before.

"Joseph," said Uncle Jaw, the next morning at breakfast, "I s'pose 'Squire Jones's daughters were not at the quilting."

"Yes, sir, they were," said our hero; "they were both there."

"Why, you don't say so!"

"They certainly were," persisted the son.

"Well, I thought the old gal had too much spunk for that: you see there is a quarrel between the deacon and them gals."

"Indeed!" said Joseph. "I thought the deacon never quarrelled with any body."

"But, you see, old Silence there, she will quarrel with him: railly, that cretur is a tough one;" and Uncle Jaw leaned back in his chair, and contemplated the quarrelsome propensities of Miss Silence with the satisfaction of a kindred spirit. "But I'll fix her yet," he continued; "I see how to work it."

"Indeed, father, I did not know that you had any thing to do with their affairs."

"Hain't I? I should like to know if I hain't!" replied Uncle Jaw,

triumphantly. "Now, see here, Joseph: you see, I mean you shall be a lawyer: I'm pretty considerable of a lawyer myself--that is, for one not college larnt; and I'll tell you how it is"--and thereupon Uncle Jaw launched forth into the case of the medder land and the mill, and concluded with, "Now, Joseph, this 'ere is a kinder whetstone for you to hone up your wits on."

In pursuance, therefore, of this plan of sharpening his wits in the manner aforesaid, our hero, after breakfast, went like a dutiful son, directly towards 'Squire Jones's, doubtless for the purpose of taking ocular survey of the meadow land, mill, and stone wall; but, by some unaccountable mistake, lost his way, and found himself standing before the door of 'Squire Jones's house.

The old squire had been among the aristocracy of the village, and his house had been the ultimate standard of comparison in all matters of style and garniture. Their big front room, instead of being strewn with lumps of sand, duly streaked over twice a week, was resplendent with a carpet of red, yellow, and black stripes, while a towering pair of long-legged brass andirons, scoured to a silvery white, gave an air of magnificence to the chimney, which was materially increased by the tall brass-headed shovel and tongs, which, like a decorous, starched married couple, stood bolt upright in their places on either side. The sanctity of the place was still further maintained by keeping the window shutters always closed, admitting only so much light as could come in by a round hole at the top of the shutter; and it was only on occasions of

extraordinary magnificence that the room was thrown open to profane eyes.

Our hero was surprised, therefore, to find both the doors and windows of this apartment open, and symptoms evident of its being in daily occupation. The furniture still retained its massive, clumsy stiffness, but there were various tokens that lighter fingers had been at work there since the notable days of good Dame Jones. There was a vase of flowers on the table, two or three books of poetry, and a little fairy work-basket, from which peeped forth the edges of some worked ruffling; there was a small writing desk, and last, not least, in a lady's collection, an album, with leaves of every color of the rainbow, containing inscriptions, in sundry strong masculine hands, "To Susan," indicating that other people had had their eyes open as well as Mr. Joseph Adams. "So," said he to himself, "this quiet little beauty has had admirers, after all;" and consequent upon this came another question, (which was none of his concern, to be sure,) whether the little lady were or were not engaged; and from these speculations he was aroused by a light footstep, and anon the neat form of Susan made its appearance.

"Good morning, Miss Jones," said he, bowing.

Now, there is something very comical in the feeling, when little boys and girls, who have always known each other as plain Susan or Joseph, first meet as "Mr." or "Miss" So-and-so. Each one feels half disposed,

half afraid, to return to the old familiar form, and awkwardly fettered by the recollection that they are no longer children. Both parties had felt this the evening before, when they met in company; but now that they were alone together, the feeling became still stronger; and when Susan had requested Mr. Adams to take a chair, and Mr. Adams had inquired after Miss Susan's health, there ensued a pause, which, the longer it continued, seemed the more difficult to break, and during which Susan's pretty face slowly assumed an expression of the ludicrous, till she was as near laughing as propriety would admit; and Mr. Adams, having looked out at the window, and up at the mantel-piece, and down at the carpet, at last looked at Susan; their eyes met; the effect was electrical; they both smiled, and then laughed outright, after which the whole difficulty of conversation vanished.

"Susan," said Joseph, "do you remember the old school house?"

"I thought that was what you were thinking of," said Susan; "but, really, you have grown and altered so that I could hardly believe my eyes last night."

"Nor I mine," said Joseph, with a glance that gave a very complimentary turn to the expression.

Our readers may imagine that after this the conversation proceeded to grow increasingly confidential and interesting; that from the account of early life, each proceeded to let the other know something of

intervening history, in the course of which each discovered a number of new and admirable traits in the other, such things being matters of very common occurrence. In the course of the conversation Joseph discovered that it was necessary that Susan should have two or three books then in his possession; and as promptitude is a great matter in such cases, he promised to bring them "to-morrow."

For some time our young friends pursued their acquaintance without a distinct consciousness of any thing except that it was a very pleasant thing to be together. During the long, still afternoons, they rambled among the fading woods, now illuminated with the radiance of the dying year, and sentimentalized and quoted poetry; and almost every evening Joseph found some errand to bring him to the house; a book for Miss Susan, or a bundle of roots and herbs for Miss Silence, or some remarkably fine yarn for her to knit--attentions which retained our hero in the good graces of the latter lady, and gained him the credit of being "a young man that knew how to behave himself." As Susan was a leading member in the village choir, our hero was directly attacked with a violent passion for sacred music, which brought him punctually to the singing school, where the young people came together to sing anthems and fuguing tunes, and to eat apples and chestnuts.

It cannot be supposed that all these things passed unnoticed by those wakeful eyes that are ever upon the motions of such "bright, particular stars;" and as is usual in such cases, many things were known to a certainty which were not yet known to the parties themselves. The young

belles and beaux whispered and tittered, and passed the original jokes and witticisms common in such cases, while the old ladies soberly took the matter in hand when they went out with their knitting to make afternoon visits, considering how much money Uncle Jaw had, how much his son would have, and what all together would come to, and whether Joseph would be a "smart man," and Susan a good housekeeper, with all the "ifs, ands, and buts" of married life.

But the most fearful wonders and prognostics crowded around the point "what Uncle Jaw would have to say to the matter." His lawsuit with the sisters being well understood, as there was every reason it should be, it was surmised what two such vigorous belligerents as himself and Miss Silence would say to the prospect of a matrimonial conjunction. It was also reported that Deacon Enos Dudley had a claim to the land which constituted the finest part of Susan's portion, the loss of which would render the consent of Uncle Jaw still more doubtful. But all this while Miss Silence knew nothing of the matter, for her habit of considering and treating Susan as a child seemed to gain strength with time. Susan was always to be seen to, and watched, and instructed, and taught; and Miss Silence could not conceive that one who could not even make pickles, without her to oversee, could think of such a matter as setting up housekeeping on her own account. To be sure, she began to observe an extraordinary change in her sister; remarked that "lately Susan seemed to be getting sort o' crazy-headed;" that she seemed not to have any "faculty" for any thing; that she had made gingerbread twice, and forgot the ginger one time, and put in mustard the other; that she shook the

saltcellar out in the tablecloth, and let the cat into the pantry half a dozen times; and that when scolded for these sins of omission or commission, she had a fit of crying, and did a little worse than before. Silence was of opinion that Susan was getting to be "weakly and naarvy," and actually concocted an unmerciful pitcher of wormwood and boneset, which she said was to keep off the "shaking weakness" that was coming over her. In vain poor Susan protested that she was well enough; Miss Silence knew better; and one evening she entertained Mr. Joseph Adams with a long statement of the case in all its bearings, and ended with demanding his opinion, as a candid listener, whether the wormwood and boneset sentence should not be executed.

Poor Susan had that very afternoon parted from a knot of young friends who had teased her most unmercifully on the score of attentions received, till she began to think the very leaves and stones were so many eyes to pry into her secret feelings; and then to have the whole case set in order before the very person, too, whom she most dreaded. "Certainly he would think she was acting like a fool; perhaps he did not mean any thing more than friendship, after all; and she would not for the world have him suppose that she cared a copper more for him than for any other friend, or that she was in love, of all things." So she sat very busy with her knitting work, scarcely knowing what she was about, till Silence called out,--

"Why, Susan, what a piece of work you are making of that stocking heel! What in the world are you doing to it?"

Susan dropped her knitting, and making some pettish answer, escaped out of the room.

"Now, did you ever?" said Silence, laying down the seam she had been cross-stitching; "what is the matter with her, Mr. Adams?"

"Miss Susan is certainly indisposed," replied our hero gravely. "I must get her to take your advice, Miss Silence."

Our hero followed Susan to the front door, where she stood looking out at the moon, and begged to know what distressed her.

Of course it was "nothing," the young lady's usual complaint when in low spirits; and to show that she was perfectly easy, she began an unsparing attack on a white rosebush near by.

"Susan!" said Joseph, laying his hand on hers, and in a tone that made her start. She shook back her curls, and looked up to him with such an innocent, confiding face!

Ah, my good reader, you may go on with this part of the story for yourself. We are principled against unveiling the "sacred mysteries," the "thoughts that breathe and words that burn," in such little moonlight interviews as these. You may fancy all that followed; and we can only assure all who are doubtful, that, under judicious management,

cases of this kind may be disposed of without wormwood or boneset. Our hero and heroine were called to sublunary realities by the voice of Miss Silence, who came into the passage to see what upon earth they were doing. That lady was satisfied by the representations of so friendly and learned a young man as Joseph that nothing immediately alarming was to be apprehended in the case of Susan; and she retired. From that evening Susan stepped about with a heart many pounds lighter than before.

"I'll tell you what, Joseph," said Uncle Jaw, "I'll tell you what, now:
I hear 'em tell that you've took and courted that 'ere Susan Jones. Now,
I jest want to know if it's true."

There was an explicitness about this mode of inquiry that took our hero quite by surprise, so that he could only reply,--

"Why, sir, supposing I had, would there be any objection to it in your mind?"

"Don't talk to me," said Uncle Jaw. "I jest want to know if it's true."

Our hero put his hands in his pockets, walked to the window, and whistled.

"'Cause if you have," said Uncle Jaw, "you may jest un-court as fast as you can; for 'Squire Jones's daughter won't get a single cent of my money, I can tell you that."

"Why, father, Susan Jones is not to blame for any thing that her father did; and I'm sure she is a pretty girl enough."

"I don't care if she is pretty. What's that to me? I've got you through college, Joseph; and a hard time I've had of it, a-delvin' and slavin'; and here you come, and the very first thing you do you must take and court that 'ere 'Squire Jones's daughter, who was always putting himself up above me. Besides, I mean to have the law on that estate yet; and Deacon Dudley, he will have the law, too; and it will cut off the best piece of land the girl has; and when you get married, I mean you shall have something. It's jest a trick of them gals at me; but I guess I'll come up with 'em yet. I'm just a-goin' down to have a 'regular hash' with old Silence, to let her know she can't come round me that way."

"Silence," said Susan, drawing her head into the window, and looking apprehensive, "there is Mr. Adams coming here."

"What, Joe Adams? Well, and what if he is?"

"No, no, sister, but it is his father--it is Uncle Jaw."

"Well, s'pose 'tis, child--what scares you? S'pose I'm afraid of him? If he wants more than I gave him last time, I'll put it on." So saying, Miss Silence took her knitting work and marched down into the sitting room, and sat herself bolt upright in an attitude of defiance, while

poor Susan, feeling her heart beat unaccountably fast, glided out of the room.

"Well, good morning, Miss Silence," said Uncle Jaw, after having scraped his feet on the scraper, and scrubbed them on the mat nearly ten minutes, in silent deliberation.

"Morning, sir," said Silence, abbreviating the "good."

Uncle Jaw helped himself to a chair directly in front of the enemy, dropped his hat on the floor, and surveyed Miss Silence with a dogged air of satisfaction, like one who is sitting down to a regular, comfortable quarrel, and means to make the most of it.

Miss Silence tossed her head disdainfully, but scorned to commence hostilities.

"So, Miss Silence," said Uncle Jaw, deliberately, "you don't think you'll do any thing about that 'ere matter."

"What matter?" said Silence, with an intonation resembling that of a roasted chestnut when it bursts from the fire.

"I really thought, Miss Silence, in that 'ere talk I had with you about 'Squire Jones's cheatin' about that 'ere----"

"Mr. Adams," said Silence, "I tell you, to begin with, I'm not a going to be sauced in this 'ere way by you. You hain't got common decency, nor common sense, nor common any thing else, to talk so to me about my father; I won't bear it, I tell you."

"Why, Miss Jones," said Uncle Jaw, "how you talk! Well, to be sure, 'Squire Jones is dead and gone, and it's as well not to call it cheatin', as I was tellin' Deacon Enos when he was talking about that 'ere lot--that 'ere lot, you know, that he sold the deacon, and never let him have the deed on't."

"That's a lie," said Silence, starting on her feet; "that's an up and down black lie! I tell you that, now, before you say another word."

"Miss Silence, railly, you seem to be getting touchy," said Uncle Jaw; "well, to be sure, if the deacon can let that pass, other folks can; and maybe the deacon will, because 'Squire Jones was a church member, and the deacon is 'mazin' tender about bringin' out any thing against professors; but railly, now, Miss Silence, I didn't think you and Susan were going to work it so cunning in this here way."

"I don't know what you mean, and, what's more, I don't care," said Silence, resuming her work, and calling back the bolt-upright dignity with which she began.

There was a pause of some moments, during which the features of Silence

worked with suppressed rage, which was contemplated by Uncle Jaw with undisguised satisfaction.

"You see, I s'pose, I shouldn't a minded your Susan's setting out to court up my Joe, if it hadn't a been for them things."

"Courting your son! Mr. Adams, I should like to know what you mean by that. I'm sure nobody wants your son, though he's a civil, likely fellow enough; yet with such an old dragon for a father, I'll warrant he won't get any body to court him, nor be courted by him neither."

"Railly, Miss Silence, you ain't hardly civil, now."

"Civil! I should like to know who could be civil. You know, now, as well as I do, that you are saying all this out of clear, sheer ugliness; and that's what you keep a doing all round the neighborhood."

"Miss Silence," said Uncle Jaw, "I don't want no hard words with you. It's pretty much known round the neighborhood that your Susan thinks she'll get my Joe, and I s'pose you was thinking that perhaps it would be the best way of settling up matters; but you see, now, I took and tell'd my son I railly didn't see as I could afford it; I took and tell'd him that young folks must have something considerable to start with; and that, if Susan lost that 'ere piece of ground, as is likely she will, it would be cutting off quite too much of a piece; so, you see, I don't want you to take no encouragement about that."

"Well, I think this is pretty well!" exclaimed Silence, provoked beyond measure or endurance; "you old torment! think I don't know what you're

at! I and Susan courting your son? I wonder if you ain't ashamed of yourself, now! I should like to know what I or she have done, now, to get that notion into your head?"

"I didn't s'pose you 'spected to get him yourself," said Uncle Jaw, "for I guess by this time you've pretty much gin up trying, hain't ye? But Susan does, I'm pretty sure."

"Here, Susan! Susan! you--come down!" called Miss Silence, in great wrath, throwing open the chamber door. "Mr. Adams wants to speak with you." Susan, fluttering and agitated, slowly descended into the room, where she stopped, and looked hesitatingly, first at Uncle Jaw and then at her sister, who, without ceremony, proposed the subject matter of the interview as follows:--

"Now, Susan, here's this man pretends to say that you've been a courting and snaring to get his son; and I just want you to tell him that you hain't never had no thought of him, and that you won't have, neither."

This considerate way of announcing the subject had the effect of bringing the burning color into Susan's face, as she stood like a convicted culprit, with her eyes bent on the floor.

Uncle Jaw, savage as he was, was always moved by female loveliness, as wild beasts are said to be mysteriously swayed by music, and looked on the beautiful, downcast face with more softening than Miss Silence, who, provoked that Susan did not immediately respond to the question, seized her by the arm, and eagerly reiterated,--

"Susan! why don't you speak, child?"

Gathering desperate courage, Susan shook off the hand of Silence, and straightened herself up with as much dignity as some little flower lifts up its head when it has been bent down by rain drops.

"Silence," she said, "I never would have come down if I had thought it was to hear such things as this. Mr. Adams, all I have to say to you is, that your son has sought me, and not I your son. If you wish to know any more, he can tell you better than I."

"Well, I vow! she is a pretty gal," said Uncle Jaw, as Susan shut the door.

This exclamation was involuntary; then recollecting himself, he picked up his hat, and saying, "Well, I guess I may as well get along hum," he began to depart; but turning round before he shut the door, he said, "Miss Silence, if you should conclude to do any thing about that 'ere fence, just send word over and let me know."

Silence, without deigning any reply, marched up into Susan's little chamber, where our heroine was treating resolution to a good fit of crying.

"Susan, I did not think you had been such a fool," said the lady. "I do want to know, now, if you've railly been thinking of getting married, and to that Joe Adams of all folks!"

Poor Susan! such an interlude in all her pretty, romantic little dreams about kindred feelings and a hundred other delightful ideas, that flutter like singing birds through the fairy land of first love. Such an interlude! to be called on by gruff human voices to give up all the cherished secrets that she had trembled to whisper even to herself. She felt as if love itself had been defiled by the coarse, rough hands that had been meddling with it; so to her sister's soothing address Susan made no answer, only to cry and sob still more bitterly than before.

Miss Silence, if she had a great stout heart, had no less a kind one, and seeing Susan take the matter so bitterly to heart, she began gradually to subside.

"Susan, you poor little fool, you," said she, at the same time giving her a hearty slap, as expressive of earnest sympathy, "I really do feel for you; that good-for-nothing fellow has been a cheatin' you, I do believe."

"O, don't talk any more about it, for mercy's sake," said Susan; "I am sick of the whole of it."

"That's you, Susan! Glad to hear you say so! I'll stand up for you, Susan; if I catch Joe Adams coming here again with his palavering face, I'll let him know!"

"No, no! Don't, for mercy's sake, say any thing to Mr. Adams--don't!"

"Well, child, don't claw hold of a body so! Well, at any rate, I'll just let Joe Adams know that we hain't nothing more to say to him."

"But I don't wish to say that--that is--I don't know--indeed, sister Silence, don't say any thing about it."

"Why not? You ain't such a natural, now, as to want to marry him, after all, hey?"

"I don't know what I want, nor what I don't want; only, Silence, do now, if you love me, do promise not to say any thing at all to Mr. Adams--don't."

"Well, then, I won't," said Silence; "but, Susan, if you railly was in love all this while, why hain't you been and told me? Don't you know that I'm as much as a mother to you, and you ought to have told me in

the beginning?"

"I don't know, Silence! I couldn't--I don't want to talk about it."

"Well, Susan, you ain't a bit like me," said Silence--a remark evincing great discrimination, certainly, and with which the conversation terminated.

That very evening our friend Joseph walked down towards the dwelling of the sisters, not without some anxiety for the result, for he knew by his father's satisfied appearance that war had been declared. He walked into the family room, and found nobody there but Miss Silence, who was sitting, grim as an Egyptian sphinx, stitching very vigorously on a meal bag, in which interesting employment she thought proper to be so much engaged as not to remark the entrance of our hero. To Joseph's accustomed "Good evening, Miss Silence," she replied merely by looking up with a cold nod, and went on with her sewing. It appeared that she had determined on a literal version of her promise not to say any thing to Mr. Adams.

Our hero, as we have before stated, was familiar with the crooks and turns of the female mind, and mentally resolved to put a bold face on the matter, and give Miss Silence no encouragement in her attempt to make him feel himself unwelcome. It was rather a frosty autumnal evening, and the fire on the hearth was decaying. Mr. Joseph bustled about most energetically, throwing down the tongs, and shovel, and

bellows, while he pulled the fire to pieces, raked out ashes and brands, and then, in a twinkling, was at the woodpile, from whence he selected a massive backlog and forestick, with accompaniments, which were soon roaring and crackling in the chimney.

"There, now, that does look something like comfort," said our hero; and drawing forward the big rocking chair, he seated himself in it, and rubbed his hands with an air of great complacency. Miss Silence looked not up, but stitched so much the faster, so that one might distinctly hear the crack of the needle and the whistle of the thread all over the apartment.

"Have you a headache to-night, Miss Silence?"

"No!" was the gruff answer.

"Are you in a hurry about those bags?" said he, glancing at a pile of unmade ones which lay by her side.

No reply. "Hang it all!" said our hero to himself, "I'll make her speak."

Miss Silence's needle book and brown thread lay on a chair beside her. Our friend helped himself to a needle and thread, and taking one of the bags, planted himself bolt upright opposite to Miss Silence, and pinning his work to his knee, commenced stitching at a rate fully equal to her

own.

Miss Silence looked up and fidgeted, but went on with her work faster than before; but the faster she worked, the faster and steadier worked our hero, all in "marvellous silence." There began to be an odd twitching about the muscles of Miss Silence's face; our hero took no notice, having pursed his features into an expression of unexampled gravity, which only grew more intense as he perceived, by certain uneasy movements, that the adversary was beginning to waver.

As they were sitting, stitching away, their needles whizzing at each other like a couple of locomotives engaged in conversation, Susan opened the door.

The poor child had been crying for the greater part of her spare time during the day, and was in no very merry humor; but the moment that her astonished eyes comprehended the scene, she burst into a fit of almost inextinguishable merriment, while Silence laid down her needle, and looked half amused and half angry. Our hero, however, continued his business with inflexible perseverance, unpinning his work and moving the seam along, and going on with increased velocity.

Poor Miss Silence was at length vanquished, and joined in the loud laugh which seemed to convulse her sister. Whereupon our hero unpinned his work, and folding it up, looked up at her with all the assurance of impudence triumphant, and remarked to Susan,--

"Your sister had such a pile of these pillow cases to make, that she was quite discouraged, and engaged me to do half a dozen of them: when I first came in she was so busy she could not even speak to me."

"Well, if you ain't the beater for impudence!" said Miss Silence.

"The beater for industry--so I thought," rejoined our hero.

Susan, who had been in a highly tragical state of mind all day, and who was meditating on nothing less sublime than an eternal separation from her lover, which she had imagined, with all the affecting attendants and consequents, was entirely revolutionized by the unexpected turn thus given to her ideas, while our hero pursued the opportunity he had made for himself, and exerted his powers of entertainment to the utmost, till Miss Silence, declaring that if she had been washing all day she should not have been more tired than she was with laughing, took up her candle, and good-naturedly left our young people to settle matters between themselves. There was a grave pause of some length when she had departed, which was broken by our hero, who, seating himself by Susan, inquired very seriously if his father had made proposals of marriage to Miss Silence that morning.

"No, you provoking creature!" said Susan, at the same time laughing at the absurdity of the idea.

"Well, now, don't draw on your long face again, Susan," said Joseph; "you have been trying to lengthen it down all the evening, if I would have let you. Seriously, now, I know that something painful passed between my father and you this morning, but I shall not inquire what it was. I only tell you, frankly, that he has expressed his disapprobation of our engagement, forbidden me to go on with it, and----"

"And, consequently, I release you from all engagements and obligations to me, even before you ask it," said Susan.

"You are extremely accommodating," replied Joseph; "but I cannot promise to be as obliging in giving up certain promises made to me, unless, indeed, the feelings that dictated them should have changed."

"O, no--no, indeed," said Susan, earnestly; "you know it is not that; but if your father objects to me----"

"If my father objects to you, he is welcome not to marry you," said Joseph.

"Now, Joseph, do be serious," said Susan.

"Well, then, seriously, Susan, I know my obligations to my father, and in all that relates to his comfort I will ever be dutiful and submissive, for I have no college boy pride on the subject of submission; but in a matter so individually my own as the choice of a

wife, in a matter that will most likely affect my happiness years and years after he has ceased to be, I hold that I have a right to consult my own inclinations, and, by your leave, my dear little lady, I shall take that liberty."

"But, then, if your father is made angry, you know what sort of a man he is; and how could I stand in the way of all your prospects?"

"Why, my dear Susan, do you think I count myself dependent upon my father, like the heir of an English estate, who has nothing to do but sit still and wait for money to come to him? No! I have energy and education to start with, and if I cannot take care of myself, and you too, then cast me off and welcome;" and, as Joseph spoke, his fine face glowed with a conscious power, which unfettered youth never feels so fully as in America. He paused a moment, and resumed: "Nevertheless, Susan, I respect my father; whatever others may say of him, I shall never forget that I owe to his hard earnings the education that enables me to do or be any thing, and I shall not wantonly or rudely cross him. I do not despair of gaining his consent; my father has a great partiality for pretty girls, and if his love of contradiction is not kept awake by open argument, I will trust to time and you to bring him round; but, whatever comes, rest assured, my dearest one, I have chosen for life, and cannot change."

The conversation, after this, took a turn which may readily be imagined by all who have been in the same situation, and will, therefore, need no

further illustration.

* * * * *

"Well, deacon, railly I don't know what to think now: there's my Joe, he's took and been a courting that 'ere Susan," said Uncle Jaw.

This was the introduction to one of Uncle Jaw's periodical visits to Deacon Enos, who was sitting with his usual air of mild abstraction, looking into the coals of a bright November fire, while his busy helpmate was industriously rattling her knitting needles by his side.

A close observer might have suspected that this was no news to the good deacon, who had given a great deal of good advice, in private, to Master Joseph of late; but he only relaxed his features into a quiet smile, and ejaculated, "I want to know!"

"Yes; and railly, deacon, that 'ere gal is a rail pretty un. I was a tellin' my folks that our new minister's wife was a fool to her."

"And so your son is going to marry her?" said the good lady; "I knew that long ago."

"Well--no--not so fast; ye see there's two to that bargain yet. You see, Joe, he never said a word to me, but took and courted the gal out of his own head; and when I come to know, says I, 'Joe,' says I, 'that 'ere gal

won't do for me;' and I took and tell'd him, then, about that 'ere old fence, and all about that old mill, and them medders of mine; and I tell'd him, too, about that 'ere lot of Susan's; and I should like to know, now, deacon, how that lot business is a going to turn out."

"Judge Smith and 'Squire Moseley say that my claim to it will stand," said the deacon.

"They do?" said Uncle Jaw, with much satisfaction; "s'pose, then, you'll sue, won't you?"

"I don't know," replied the deacon, meditatively.

Uncle Jaw was thoroughly amazed; that any one should have doubts about entering suit for a fine piece of land, when sure of obtaining it, was a problem quite beyond his powers of solving.

"You say your son has courted the girl," said the deacon, after a long pause; "that strip of land is the best part of Susan's share; I paid down five hundred dollars on the nail for it; I've got papers here that Judge Smith and 'Squire Moseley say will stand good in any court of law."

Uncle Jaw pricked up his ears and was all attention, eying with eager looks the packet; but, to his disappointment, the deacon deliberately laid it into his desk, shut and locked it, and resumed his seat.

"Now, railly," said Uncle Jaw, "I should like to know the particulars."

"Well, well," said the deacon, "the lawyers will be at my house to-morrow evening, and if you have any concern about it, you may as well come along."

Uncle Jaw wondered all the way home at what he could have done to get himself into the confidence of the old deacon, who, he rejoiced to think, was a going to "take" and go to law like other folks.

The next day there was an appearance of some bustle and preparation about the deacon's house; the best room was opened and aired; an ovenful of cake was baked; and our friend Joseph, with a face full of business, was seen passing to and fro, in and out of the house, from various closetings with the deacon. The deacon's lady bustled about the house with an air of wonderful mystery, and even gave her directions about eggs and raisins in a whisper, lest they should possibly let out some eventful secret.

The afternoon of that day Joseph appeared at the house of the sisters, stating that there was to be company at the deacon's that evening, and he was sent to invite them.

"Why, what's got into the deacon's folks lately," said Silence, "to have company so often? Joe Adams, this 'ere is some 'cut up' of yours. Come,

what are you up to now?"

"Come, come, dress yourselves and get ready," said Joseph; and, stepping up to Susan, as she was following Silence out of the room, he whispered something into her ear, at which she stopped short and colored violently.

"Why, Joseph, what do you mean?"

"It is so," said he.

"No, no, Joseph; no, I can't, indeed I can't."

"But you can, Susan."

"O Joseph, don't."

"O Susan, do."

"Why, how strange, Joseph!"

"Come, come, my dear, you keep me waiting. If you have any objections on the score of propriety, we will talk about them to-morrow;" and our hero looked so saucy and so resolute that there was no disputing further; so, after a little more lingering and blushing on Susan's part, and a few kisses and persuasions on the part of the suitor, Miss Susan

seemed to be brought to a state of resignation.

At a table in the middle of Uncle Enos's north front room were seated the two lawyers, whose legal opinion was that evening to be fully made up. The younger of these, 'Squire Moseley, was a rosy, portly, laughing little bachelor, who boasted that he had offered himself, in rotation, to every pretty girl within twenty miles round, and, among others, to Susan Jones, notwithstanding which he still remained a bachelor, with a fair prospect of being an old one; but none of these things disturbed the boundless flow of good nature and complacency with which he seemed at all times full to overflowing. On the present occasion he appeared to be particularly in his element, as if he had some law business in hand remarkably suited to his turn of mind; for, on finishing the inspection of the papers, he started up, slapped his graver brother on the back, made two or three flourishes round the room, and then seizing the old deacon's hand, shook it violently, exclaiming,--

"All's right, deacon, all's right! Go it! go it! hurrah!"

When Uncle Jaw entered, the deacon, without preface, handed him a chair and the papers, saying,--

"These papers are what you wanted to see. I just wish you would read them over."

Uncle Jaw read them deliberately over. "Didn't I tell ye so, deacon? The

case is as clear as a bell: now ye will go to law, won't you?"

"Look here, Mr. Adams; now you have seen these papers, and heard what's to be said, I'll make you an offer. Let your son marry Susan Jones, and I'll burn these papers and say no more about it, and there won't be a girl in the parish with a finer portion."

Uncle Jaw opened his eyes with amazement, and looked at the old man, his mouth gradually expanding wider and wider, as if he hoped, in time, to swallow the idea.

"Well, now, I swan!" at length he ejaculated.

"I mean just as I say," said the deacon.

"Why, that's the same as giving the gal five hundred dollars out of your own pocket, and she ain't no relation neither."

"I know it," said the deacon; "but I have said I will do it."

"What upon 'arth for?" said Uncle Jaw.

"To make peace," said the deacon, "and to let you know that when I say it is better to give up one's rights than to quarrel, I mean so. I am an old man; my children are dead"--his voice faltered--"my treasures are laid up in heaven; if I can make the children happy, why, I will. When I

thought I had lost the land, I made up my mind to lose it, and so I can now."

Uncle Jaw looked fixedly on the old deacon, and said,--

"Well, deacon, I believe you. I vow, if you hain't got something ahead in t'other world, I'd like to know who has--that's all; so, if Joe has no objections, and I rather guess he won't have----"

"The short of the matter is," said the squire, "we'll have a wedding; so come on;" and with that he threw open the parlor door, where stood Susan and Joseph in a recess by the window, while Silence and the Rev. Mr. Bissel were drawn up by the fire, and the deacon's lady was sweeping up the hearth, as she had been doing ever since the party arrived.

Instantly Joseph took the hand of Susan, and led her to the middle of the room; the merry squire seized the hand of Miss Silence, and placed her as bridesmaid, and before any one knew what they were about, the ceremony was in actual progress, and the minister, having been previously instructed, made the two one with extraordinary celerity.

"What! what! what!" said Uncle Jaw. "Joseph! Deacon!"

"Fair bargain, sir," said the squire. "Hand over your papers, deacon."

The deacon handed them, and the squire, having read them aloud,

proceeded, with much ceremony, to throw them into the fire; after which, in a mock solemn oration, he gave a statement of the whole affair, and concluded with a grave exhortation to the new couple on the duties of wedlock, which unbent the risibles even of the minister himself.

Uncle Jaw looked at his pretty daughter-in-law, who stood half smiling, half blushing, receiving the congratulations of the party, and then at Miss Silence, who appeared full as much taken by surprise as himself.

"Well, well, Miss Silence, these 'ere young folks have come round us slick enough," said he. "I don't see but we must shake hands upon it." And the warlike powers shook hands accordingly, which was a signal for general merriment.

As the company were dispersing, Miss Silence laid hold of the good deacon, and by main strength dragged him aside. "Deacon," said she, "I take back all that 'ere I said about you, every word on't."

"Don't say any more about it, Miss Silence," said the good man; "it's gone by, and let it go."

"Joseph!" said his father, the next morning, as he was sitting at breakfast with Joseph and Susan, "I calculate I shall feel kinder proud of this 'ere gal! and I'll tell you what, I'll jest give you that nice little delicate Stanton place that I took on Stanton's mortgage: it's a nice little place, with green blinds, and flowers, and all them things,

just right for Susan."

And accordingly, many happy years flew over the heads of the young couple in the Stanton place, long after the hoary hairs of their kind benefactor, the deacon, were laid with reverence in the dust. Uncle Jaw was so far wrought upon by the magnanimity of the good old man as to be very materially changed for the better. Instead of quarrelling in real earnest all around the neighborhood, he confined himself merely to battling the opposite side of every question with his son, which, as the latter was somewhat of a logician, afforded a pretty good field for the exercise of his powers; and he was heard to declare at the funeral of the old deacon, that, "after all, a man got as much, and may be more, to go along as the deacon did, than to be all the time fisting and jawing; though I tell you what it is," said he, afterwards, "'tain't every one that has the deacon's faculty, any how."