

Beaver Kill, my companions thought ; but, from the position of the sun, I said, on the Mill Brook, about six miles below our team ; for I remembered having seen, in coming up this stream, a deep, wild valley that led up into the mountains, like this one. Soon the banks of the stream became lower, and we moved into the woods. Here we entered upon an obscure wood-road, which presently conducted us into the midst of a vast hemlock forest. The land had a gentle slope, and we wondered why the lumbermen and barkmen who prowl through these woods had left this fine tract untouched. Beyond this the forest was mostly birch and maple.

We were now close to the settlement. One rod more, and we were out of the woods. It took us a moment to comprehend the scene. Things looked very strange at first ; but quickly they began to change and to put on familiar

features. Some magic scene-shifting seemed to take place before my eyes, till — there stood the farm-house at which we had stopped two days before, and at the same moment we heard the stamping of our team in the barn. We sat down and laughed heartily over our good luck. Our desperate venture had resulted better than we had dared to hope, and had shamed our wisest plans. At the house our arrival had been anticipated about this time, and dinner was being put upon the table.

It was then five o'clock, so that we had been in the woods just forty-eight hours ; but if time is only phenomenal, as the philosophers say, and life only in feeling, as the poets aver, we were some months, if not years, older at that moment than we had been two days before. Yet younger too, — though this be a paradox, — for the birches had infused into us some of their own suppleness and strength.

A S T A T U E .

LEAVE what is white for whiter use ;
 For such a purpose as your own
 Would be a dreary jest, a coarse abuse,
 A bitter wrong to snowy stone.

Let the pure marble's silence hold
 Its hidden gods, and do not break
 Those unseen images, divine and old,
 To-day, for one mean man's small sake !

THE FOE IN THE HOUSEHOLD.

CHAPTER XVI.

A WEEK had passed since Dr. Detwiler had entered the preacher's house, and when he went again the aspect of the place had changed to his eyes.

He found the family together. Mr. Holcombe had returned from a circuit, and the doctor had made sure of that fact before he crossed the stream. Detwiler had been in the habit of saying that another house like this of Preacher Holcombe's was not to be found through the length and breadth of Swatara. Disorder, unrest, discord, falsehood he could bear the more patiently, because he knew of one house in which purity, truth, and love reigned. He could not overestimate the munitions of courage, strength, and hope he had drawn from this arsenal. But now as he came he felt more like retreating. He was afraid that he should make a discovery; for the suspicion which had flashed upon him a week ago, while he talked with Edna, though many a time rebuked, dismissed, put down, still existed, and it was to convince himself that it had no right to exist that he now came.

Mr. Holcombe, happy man! was home again after a fortnight of travel, preaching, praying, and exhortation, and now sat under his own vine, playing his flute, the girls on either side of him, — Rosa with her hymn-book, and Edna singing, but at the same time at work with her pencil, making a sketch of him; while opposite sat Delia with a week's mending before her, the picture of content. That box of paints had made Edna so happy that in her inmost heart Mrs. Holcombe was glad.

There was a commotion when the doctor came, — welcome of looks and words; and after a while the singing was resumed, because he said he had heard nothing but groans and complaints for a year at the very least.

He was sitting beside Rosa, opposite

to Edna; by degrees his eyes wandered from the book, and he closed them to listen; when he opened them again Edna had stopped her work for a moment, and was singing with all her soul. The turn of her head, the expression of her face, — why he had seen all that in Rolfe a hundred times. Perhaps his surprise, or some other emotion, became visible on his face; glancing towards Delia, he heard something, — it almost seemed to him a voice; it must have been a magnetic appeal, — asking, "What are you thinking of?"

"Something stranger than was ever thought of before," he answered, as distinctly.

Delia became absorbed in her sewing, and did not look up again.

How happy the young folks were, displaying to the doctor the work they had done, and asking his opinion, and singing their songs! They showed him how far they had gone in the geology which he had induced them to take up, telling them that the rocks and mountains about them would become as easy to read as any other book, if they would but master the language of the volume. And they showed him the specimens — the slate-stones covered with the impressions of beautiful ferns — they had collected from the materials thrown out of the old mine to which Mr. Boyd had turned his attention anew with such good results.

But at length all this was over, and the doctor walked out to the field back of the garden to bring a pitcher of water from the famous spring there.

It was quite dark, though starlight, and Delia followed him into the porch with a candle. It was a still evening, hardly a breath of air was stirring.

"Stand just there," he said, "the light falls on the path exactly"; but as if in accordance with a wish, the light of the candle was just then extinguished.