

"Oh I always forget and leave that gate open," exclaimed Mrs. Stone. "Here Spec! Here Spec! Go into the yard."

Mrs. Stone parted the pugnacious dogs, pushed Speckle into the yard and shut the gate. She then took long steps across the mud to the rear of the wagon, and began inspecting the meat. An assortment of chunks, bones, steaks, ribs, scraps etc., occupied the back end of the wagon. On a pile of pork farther front lay a broad, white platter with a dial scales attached, which the butcher was about to hang up. Just behind the seat was a long blue box or chest in which eggs were deposited. On both sides, stuck between the slats, and once white but now gray and blood-spotted side curtains, were greasy, paper-backed account books, with dull pencils between the leaves.

"Mr. Joel, how much is that piece of pork?"

"Three pounds and a quarter. Thirty-five cents."

"I'll take it then. We must have fresh pork once more. Henry always says he is lost from the time they stop killing green pork in the spring until they commence again in the fall."

"I have some nice lard today, Mrs. Stone. Need any?"

"Lard? No, not this morning. We have some, yet. I think that is all today. What do you give for eggs this week?"

"Twelve cents."

"Twelve cents? Gone up since last week. Myra! Myra! Bring out that basket of eggs from the far cupboard. Careful you don't fall with them. Oh, Mr. Joel, have you got a shoe-maker this morning?"

"Yes, mamma."

"Well, I'll take it. How much will that be altogether?"

"Ma? Ma? Ma? What makes his dog's legs that way?"

"I don't know, dear; but you musn't play with him."

"Why?"

"I am afraid he would not like little boys that ask as many questions as you do."

"Why?"

"Never mind about it. Do as I tell you."

"But, Ma, don't they hurt him?"