

Two Cross Words.

"Lucy, if you mean to sew on this button, I do wish you'd do it—I can't wait all day."

Tom didn't speak a bit cross, only emphatic; but I was out of temper that morning, and my head ached badly from sitting up late the night before. Tom had gone to a supper—for the second time since our marriage—given by some of his bachelor friends, and had come home the worse for it. It had provoked me intensely. So I had followed him to his bed in sullen silence, and awoke none the better pleased after my sleep, on the morning alluded to. To make the matter worse, just as he spoke to me about the button, the knife with which I was cutting bread for his lunch, slipped, inflicting a deep gash on my hand, and the baby awoke and set up her sharp little cry from the cradle, all in one and the same moment.

"You can wait as long as I did last night, I reckon," I replied sharply, really angry at last. Don't hurry me—I do all I can, and more than I am able to do with one pair of hands."

Tom dropped his button and turned to me with a startled "Why, Lucy!"

"Don't Lucy me," I retorted, throwing down the bread, and catching up the baby, while the blood streamed from my hand over her white gown. "You've done enough—you've broke my heart! I wish I had never seen you—I wish I was back again with my father and my mother."

I broke down with a burst of hysterical tears, and seeing the blood on my hand, Tom came over and knelt down beside me. "Why, Lucy," he said, his voice and eyes full of tenderness, "you've cut your hand. Why didn't you say so? Here, give me the child while you bind it up—see how it bleeds!"

He held out his hands for the baby, but I snatched her away and went on sobbing.

"Don't cry, Lucy," he continued, stroking the hair back from my forehead—"please don't; I know I have done wrong, dear—but I didn't mean it. I fell in with some of the old boys and they persuaded against my will. But it's the last time, Lucy—the last time."

Why didn't I turn to him, then, and help and encourage him? Because my mean, tyrannous temper got the better of my woman's heart.

"Oh, yes!" I said sneeringly, "it is easy enough to make fine promises—you told me the same thing before. How can you expect me to trust you now?"

Tom was spirited and quick tempered—great, loveing-hearted men always are. He sprung to his feet like a flash, and, before I had time to speak or think, had left the room. I tossed the child into the cradle and rushed to the door, but was too late he had gone. I just caught a glimpse of him turning the corner.

I went back to the little breakfast room; how blank and dear it looked, and what a sharp, stinging thorn there was in the very core of my heart! I loved Tom, and he loved me. We had been married only eighteen months, and this was our first quarrel. I sat down with the baby in my arms, heedless of my morning work, and fell to thinking. All the old happy days came back, and the one in particular when we sat in Dunberry Wood. It was in the autumn, and all the world seemed in a blaze of gold, as the sun slid down, and the squirrels scattered overhead, dropping a ripe nut, now and then, into my lap as I sat there, with the last rose of summer in my hair, knitting a purse for Tom.

"Lucy," he said, as I wove in the last golden stitches, "you've knit my love—my very life—up in that purse. Tell me now, before you finish it, how is to be? am I to have you and—oh! I won't think of it ever, Lucy, it would be too dead!"

"No, Tom," I answered, "you are to have the purse, and the hand that knit it too."

Poor Tom, he cried then just like a lit-

tle child—he, the bravest man in the village.

"No fault in him, only a little too wild, too fond of gay company; but you must tame him, Lucy, as your mother did me."

That was my old father's advice on our wedding day. My heart smote me dreadfully as I recalled it to mind that morning. Had I done my duty? Had I followed the example of my mother, who never let fall an unkind word.

But Tom would be home to his dinner. The thought brought me to my feet. I did my work briskly, and went about cooking just such a dinner as I knew he would like. The plum pudding was done to perfection; the baby in a clean slip, and myself all smiles to receive him when the clock struck one. But he didn't come.

I put by the untasted dinner and prepared supper, and lit a bright fire in the little parlor. He should have a pleasant welcome. But he did not come. Eight, nine, ten o'clock, and I put by the untasted supper, and baby and I went up to the nursery to wait and watch. How the little thorn in my heart pierced and rankled! Tom had broken his promise, and my unkindness was the cause! Nothing else rang in my ears through the long hours.

About two o'clock I heard a noise below and went to the window. There was a man on the porch; I could see him in the dim light.

"Tom, is that you?" I asked softly, putting out my head.

"Yes; open the door, Lucy; quick, the police are after me."

My heart sunk. The police after him! what could he have done? I ran down swiftly and unlocked the door. But as I did so two men, wearing official badges, stepped upon the porch, and one of them laid his hand on Tom's shoulder and said: "I arrest you, sir."

"What for?" I cried.

"For murder!"

(To be continued.)

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