

ONE OF HIS BLUNDERS.

FIVE minutes past nine!" The words were impatiently uttered by a man of fifty, who stood looking up at the clock on the platform of the little station of Glenwood. This was John Milward, a farmer from Carlton, a small town several miles from the station, a large man in rough tweeds, a trifle gray, slightly bent, bluff, honest looking and clean shaven except for a little patch of whisker. He walked slowly along the wooden platform till he came to where it suddenly inclined. He paused here to glance along the line where it wound like a stream between high grassy banks, sprinkled with fiery poppies and yellow buttercups; but although his eye could trace the railroad for some distance, no white wreath curling up from the meadows denoted the approach of the train.

The station master and porter watched him, having nothing better to do. The former was trying to guess who it was Mr. Milward had come to meet, for this was one of those quiet parts of Pennsylvania where every one knows every one else; the latter wondering whether it would pay better to carry the baggage of Mr. Milward's expected visitor to the dog-cart, and to leave the minister of the only church in Carlton, who always came by this particular train, to Jem, the other porter, or vice versa.

John Milward veered round and sauntered back, whereupon the station master pulled out his watch and compared it with the clock. He opened his mouth as if to address the farmer as he passed, but seeing that the latter was deeply occupied with his own thoughts, he shut it again and went into his office.

Presently Milward removed his hat and passed his handkerchief across his brow. He looked at his hat thoughtfully before putting it on again. It was his Sunday one, and there was a black band around it, which awoke a train of ideas so absorbing that he did not heed the sun striking fiercely on his head, until he awoke from his reverie with a start at the sound of a bell clanging within a yard of where he stood.

Five minutes more and the engine steamed in. Milward's face flushed and he looked eagerly into the car windows. Three passengers for Glenwood—the minister and his nephew, and a young girl in deep mourning. As the last-named arrival sprang lightly from the last car, the farmer approached her and said, with a shade of hesitation—

"Are you—why, yes, it is—Emily!"

The girl held out a small hand and looked up nervously. She winced slightly at the vigorous grasp it received, and shrank a little from the open look of admiration.

As she raised her eyes, some sudden touch of emotion held the burly farmer silent. It was only apparent in a slight contraction of the brow and compression of the lips, and its cause saw nothing. She had taken him in with one swift glance, and the result was a sigh. A

few minutes later they were sitting side by side in a dog-cart, rattling along the road.

"You are tired," said the farmer, slowly pulling up. "There is a good hour's drive before you. Shall I turn back into Glenwood and get you a cup of tea or a glass of wine?"

"No, thank you. I would rather wait until we get home."

He instantly gave the whip a sharp swish that made the mare jump and start at an energetic canter, which gradually subsided into a more moderate pace. There was silence for a time. Both felt constrained and at a loss. The farmer broke the silence with—

"Look at that! There's a view!"

He gave the whip an expressive semi-circular sweep, and, rousing herself, the girl looked round.

"It is lovely," she said, but without warmth, as her eyes dwelt on the varied landscape stretching out on all sides in green hills and dales, with dark woods nestling in the hollows or climbing the distant slopes.

"I hope you will like the place," he said, after another pause.

"Oh, yes, I hope so; tell me about it. Who is there in the house besides you? I have heard nothing, you know. It is all strange."

"Did not your—" began Milward, his voice not quite so firm as usual—"didn't *she* tell you anything of us and our ways?"

Emily shook her head, but as he was not looking at her she said—

"Nothing."

"There's only me and Azubah, your aunt. You will like her, I hope."

Little more was said until they drove in at a white gate and up a gravel drive to a square, red house, covered with wisteria. The farmer assisted her to alight, and leaving the horse to a man, led the way into a large dining room, where a substantial tea was spread in readiness for the travelers.

"Welcome home, my darling," he said, looking at her for a minute. And then taking her in his arms, he kissed her affectionately. "This is your home for the future, Emily. I can't tell you how glad I am to have you."

Emily half shrank from the resounding, hearty kisses, but the tone of the simple words touched her. She raised her face and pressed her soft lips to his cheek.

"Thank you, father."

The action, for some reason or other, affected Milward strangely. A spasm passed over his face, and almost abruptly he turned away.

A tall, plain woman came into the room. Milward laid his hand on his daughter's shoulder.

"Here she is, tired and hungry. Emily, this is your aunt, Azubah."

The two saluted each other, and the girl was carried off upstairs.

While they were gone the farmer brought in the boxes, which he had at first forgotten, and stood looking