

**M**other Hawkins's  
Daughter-In-Law.

"Oh, come now, Nancy! if I was you I wouldn't take on! Maybe it'll all turn out right," said the sociable neighbor, who had dropped in to take a dish of tea, as Mother Hawkins wiped her eyes with her apron.

"Wal, mebbe 'twill!" sighed the good lady.

"But it don't seem so now. Sit up, Mis' Jones; the cream biscuit'll spile with waitin.' Poor Will! he was so fond o' them biscuits! I'll bet she can't make 'em! 'Tain't his marryin' I mind so much," she went on, as she poured the fragrant tea into the thin, old china cups. "If he'd a-married a decent country gal, an' let her come here to live long o' me, I wouldn't a-cared. But no! he must go taggin' after one o' them finified city gals. Nothin' else 'u'd do him! Mis' Jones, do have another lump o' sugar in your tea?"

"No, Mis' Hawkins, the tea is jest right now."

"Wal, take a slice more o' this briled ham, then. It's our own home-cured pork."

"Thank ye, I don't care ef I do take a bite more. I don't eat much in general; but your vittles is so good they kind o' give one an appetite."

"Wal, yes," said Mother Hawkins, with another sigh. "Will always 'lowed I was a fair cook. And he was that fond o' good eatin'! And I 'low he'll git none o' it now."

"Mebbe he will, Mis' Hawkins. I've knowed some o' them city folks what was fust-rate cooks, an' liked the country, too."

"Oh, yes! they all like to come out for a week or so while berries is ripe. But you fetch 'em out an' set 'em to cookin' for harvest hands when it's right hot, an' you'd see!"

"Will's wife may not be one o' that kind, Nancy."

"Bet she is! He found her 'tendin' a boardin' school. An' jest think of it! they do say it is a Infidel school into the bargain. Oh, I know what kind of a giddy, harum-scarum thing she must be. An' I ain't goin' to have anything to do with 'em—that's flat! An' I told Will so when he writ for me to come an' see 'em married."

"La, Mis' Hawkins! didn't you go?"

"No, I didn't. Here, have another spoonful o' this honey, Mis' Jones—do. It's made o' white clover, an' as clear as can be. There! No, I didn't go, an' I writ to Will he needn't fetch her here, neither."

"Now, Mis' Hawkins, you didn't, really?"

"Yes, I did," said the old lady, doggedly. "I know a hull lot o' them university graduates—a-switchin' an' a-draggin their long-tailed gowns, an' a-bangin, their

hair when their heads ought to be banged, an' a-humpin' themselves up with bustles, to look like a camel, an' the Lord knows what all, fur I don't. But I set my face agin 'em. Will is a-makin' money there, an' there he'll stay till she spends it all. Then he'll want to come back to his old mammy. But he can't do it. He left his mother an' took up with her, an' now he may jest stick to her, an' make the best o' his bad bargain! 'Tain't any use to talk to me."

Mrs. Jones knew the stubborn old lady well enough to believe that. So she said no more. But after she got home she said to her own family:

"If I had as likely a son as Will Hawkins I wouldn't go back on 'im fur no gal that ever drewed breath; an' I'll bet a penny Nancy Hawkins lives to wish she hadn't."

Meantime in his cozy home in the city, Will had been gloomily reading his old mother's last curt letter.

"Don't let it worry you, Will," said his bride, soothingly.

"I can't help it, Lily," was his reply. "She was always such a good mother to me that it hurts me to have her be so wrong and obstinate."

"Go out and see her and talk it over," suggested Lily.

"Never!" answered Will, firmly. "Unless business takes me, I shall never enter my old home, unless you go too. If my mother cannot receive my wife she cannot receive me. It is no use talking to me about it."

There was a touch of the old lady's stubborn spirit in the son, you see.

Mother Hawkins was a stout, fleshy old lady; but she did all her except for a few weeks in summer, when haying and harvesting came on.

This season, right in the midst of haying, Mary Jane, the hired girl, fell out of the haymow, where she had been hunting for eggs, and broke her arm, and of course she had to go home. Not another girl could be got for love or money, and so Mother Hawkins had to do all herself.

The two hired men could get the wood and do the milking and churning. But Mrs. Hawkins had to sweat over the stove, and the weather growing hotter every day. And one morning Mother Hawkins could not get up. The hired men got the best breakfast they could, and then Mrs. Hawkins sent one of them for the doctor, bidding him to stop on the way home and see if Lucy Jones wouldn't come and stay until she could find a girl.

Now it so happened that important business brought Will Hawkins out to Downport that very morning. He did not intend to visit his mother; but he saw John coming out of the doctor's office,

and he stopped him and learned how sick his mother was.

Then he felt in duty bound to call on her. He went, and the old lady was greatly surprised and, as he could see, somewhat pleased to see him.

But not once did she ask for or allude to his wife.

"Mother, you ought to have a girl," said Will.

"Well, goodness, so I ought;" groaned the old lady. "I told John to get Lucy Jones for a few days, if he could. But she ain't no manner o' 'count if she comes; and where to get anybody the mercy knows—I don't. I've tried everywhere."

"I think perhaps I could send you out one," said Will. "Good girls can sometimes be found in town."

"Well, for pity's sake, do it then. I'll pay her well, if she's worth her salt."

"I'll try," said William. "I may not succeed, but if I can find one I'll send her out on the noon train. If you don't like her you needn't keep her, you know."

"Oh, I'll be glad to get anybody," groaned the sick old lady, tossing restlessly.

John came back just then, saying that Lucy Jones was away on a visit and could not be hired; so Will, who must leave at once to catch the up train, promised again to do his best to find a girl.

"I reckon I'd orter asked after her," said the sick woman to herself after he was gone, and she had not even asked him to come back. "But I couldn't get the consent of my own mind to do it, nobow."

John scraped up what he could for dinner, and about 1 o'clock he came upstairs and said, "There's a lady down stairs to see you, mum."

"A lady? Good gracious! an' me in this fix. Who is it, John?"

"I hain't no idea who, mum."

"Well, fetch her up, since it's got to be; there's no help for it. I hope 'tain't no company come to stay, for I couldn't keep her if 'tis."

John departed, presently returning with a tall, handsome lady, dressed in a stylish black cashmere.

"Good day," said Mrs. Hawkins, seeing she did not know the lady.

"Good afternoon," said the lady, pleasantly, advancing toward the bed. "I suppose you are Mrs. Hawkins?"

"Yes, I be." And the sick woman wondered what was coming next.

"I hear you are in need of a girl," said the stranger.

"Lord knows I am!" groaned Mother Hawkins.

"Well, your son, Mr. Hawkins, sent me out from the city to see if I would suit you."

"You!" Mother Hawkins sat up in bed, in surprise at this elegant woman asking for the place of a

servant. "Look at your hands!" she said.

"They are not very black, I know. But they are used to doing housework, madam, I assure you. Will you try me?"

"You came from the city," said Mother Hawkins, without answering the question. "Do you live there?"

"Yes, madam."

"Then what do you know about farm work?"

"Everything," the stranger answered, confidently. "I was brought up on a farm and have only lived in the city three years."

"But them fine clothes!" sighed Mother Hawkins.

"I have plain calico ones in my satchel," said this odd girl.

"What wages do you want?"

"Whatever you usually pay."

"I generally give two dollars and a half."

"Very well, that will suit me."

"What would you do first if you stayed?"

"The first thing, I would make you a cup of tea and a bit of toast. Then I would change my dress, go down stairs and get to work."

"For pity's sake, do it, then!" said Mother Hawkins, as with a sigh of intense relief she dropped back upon her pillows.

The stranger left the room, and in a short time she was back again with the tea and toast temptingly arranged on a waiter, and as nice as hands could make them.

After they were disposed of, she brought fresh water and towels, bathed Mother Hawkins's hot face and hands, and brushed her hair neatly back under her cap.

"There, that is better, isn't it?" she asked.

"Yes, indeed," sighed the sick woman.

"What's your name, child?"

"Mary Sherman."

"Well, Mary, if you do as well for the rest as you have for me, I shall think it was the Lord's massy sent you here."

"I shall try to be useful, but it will take me a few days to learn about things in the house."

"Mebbe I'll be down by that time," sighed Mother Hawkins, as she settled herself for a nap.

But she was not down in a day or two. It was four weeks before she could be helped down to the sitting-room. But everything had gone on as orderly under Mary's hands as if Mother Hawkins had been mistress herself. And no sister or mother ever had more untiring care than she gave to the sick woman, who felt that indeed she had found a treasure, and could not bear to think of the time when Mary must go away.

William had written twice to know how his mother was, but he had not been down again.

The day that Mother Hawkins went to the table for the first time