

neighbors towards her husband. She did not know that sinister reports had spread throughout the vicinity.

Tommy Minor had not neglected to tell his parents about the young man who deliberately rode away from the poor woman whom so many friends were trying to find. Encouraged by the outspoken opinion of his parents, the boy took delight in repeating the story to all he knew. Gossip, particularly when one's reputation is to suffer, does not rely for sustenance upon the person who starts it, nor does the story remain ever the same. Some people even heard and repeated an account of "A man who threw his mother-in-law into the river and watched her drown."

So it happened that Montgomery's acquaintances treated him coldly. They glanced at him suspiciously. They whispered to one another and shook their heads. Only John Ball seemed cordial, but it was with a very significant look that he said once:

"Well, Ronald, it's a great relief that old lady Smith died, isn't it?"

The object of suspicion appeared indifferent to the contempt in which his friends held him. They could think anything they pleased, but what if she should hear and believe the report?

Again Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery were driving along the familiar road. Suddenly the husband caught a glimpse of an old woman sitting on that well known log. To him it seemed that the body he had helped lay away over a year ago had been brought to life, and as an accusation against him was sitting in the identical spot where he had last seen it in life. He trembled violently and turned deathly white. A little boy, hitherto unnoticed by Montgomery, cried out:

"Grandma, that's the man that left old lady Smith to die! I seen him that very day."

Montgomery sank down apparently lifeless. He was sure that the daughter knew the circumstances of the mother's death. In the confusion of the moment, however, Clementine did not hear what Tommy Minor had said, and she was more perplexed than ever as to the reason for her husband's acting so strangely. "Mr. Montgomery has had a nervous break down," she told the neighbors.

Montgomery no longer assumed an attitude of indifference. He seemed a man who was undergoing severest torture. To his credit