spell, after all my years of drudgery," she declared, and Ezra was silent, but he mourned in spirit. Three days of the slatternly new cook had given him indigestion. Certainly his mother had been a model housekeeper. How he missed the homemade sausage and buckwheat cakes, and neighborhood pure maple sirup, the nectarlike coffee for breakfast. No more perfect corn beef and cabbage for dinner, and watery apple sauce and soggy biscuits for supper. Three days later, with mother speeding east on her grand tour, Ezra felt that he could stand slops and dirt no longer. He resolved finally upon the variety of the visits his mother had outlined.

"I am lonesome and out at sorts," he ruminated, "and it will be an experience, anyhow, and if mother is going to wander about and break up the home, why not a wife? Maybe I'll find one in my travels—who can tell?" and he smiled quaintly.

Ezra was no clod, only homespun. He knew fully how to conduct himself in company and made a good impression with the Mantells. His rumored fortune it was, however, that made a better one. He was soon aware of this, judging from the splendid inquiries of Mr. and Mrs. Mantell. Then they threw Helena at his head.

She was an only daughter, tall, stately, cold as ice. Amid her stateliness, however, Ezra soon discerned that she was bent on capturing him. The family was truly aristocratic, that was their bent and pose. They were selfish, skimping, sacrificing comfort to make a show.

"Three days of these people was all I could stand," soliloquized Ezra as, gracefully as he could, he took his departure, feeling that he was lucky to have escaped still a bachelor and heart free.

Then Ezra tried the Moores. They had money and lived at a private hotel. There were two girls here, one a blue stocking, the other a languishing sentimentalist. They played their arts alternately. The flimsy feeding at the table d'hote did the rest for Ezra. He made his adieux and struck off for a rural jaunt, feeling free once more.

Then came a crisis in Ezra's life. He was passing a field hedge when his quick ear caught a moaning sound. He brushed aside the osage orange bushes to locate a man lying exhausted to faintness. Beside him lay a scythe. It was dabbled with blood. Then Ezra saw that he must have stumbled and one limb had fallen athwart of the keen blade.

The man's eyes closed as Ezra sprang to his side. The latter saw at a glance that the victim of the accident was bleeding to death. It was a question of a speedy emergency service. Within a few minutes Ezra had stanched the ebbling life tide, bound up the limb at the cost of his coat, and had the satisfaction of seeing the man come back to consciousness, though weakly.

"Home," he just whispered, and pointed to a near rise. Ezra ran to its top to discover a handsome farmhouse a few hundred yards distant. He took up the man in his arms and proceeded toward it.

"You saved my life," declared Robert Wadham that evening, as he and his daughter Elinor and Ezra sat in the comfortable best room.

The daughter—ah! there had come a revelation to Ezra. Perhaps her pretty gratitude had stirred him more deeply than common, or her tender devotion to her father. At all events, an invited guest, Ezra went to sleep that night feeling that he had seen the bonniest face in Christendom.

The breakfast next morning settled him—homemade sausage, real buckwheat cakes, genuine maple sirup—and Elinor had prepared the meal.

Four months later, a tired-out, disappointed woman, Mrs. Tuttle got off the train to receive a royal welcome from her waiting son.