

a kindly natured chap, spite of his ginger hair, and many's the time he's carried my Jobu's physick from the doctor, and never charged nothing neither."

She stooped painfully, and laid her fragrant tribute on the neglected grave, eyeing each rose jealously as she removed it from the bunch.

Then she arranged the ivy so as to hide the stems, remarking as she did so, "there that looks more fitty like."

One side of the churchyard was bounded by a high hedge, where tall foxgloves and delicate meadow-sweet had it all their own way.

To the surprise of the girl the old woman now left the beaten track, and threaded her way through the graves to the hedge.

"There be a poor young fellow buried hereabouts as hanged hisself," she remarked by way of explanation. "He was the son of our sexton, he lost an leg through a gun accident; that were the beginning of his troubles, and then the girl he was keeping company with, her jilted him, and one night he met her sweethearting in the lane with another chap, and that fairly drove him mad, and next day he took his life. The Crowner he sat on him at the Blue Bell, and they brought in temporary insanity, but his father, he took it so to heart, saying as how his son had shamed the whole family, and he had unburied right out of the way like, and he didn't put up no headstone excepting this little wooden slab with just his name and the date of his death. But I always dresses his grave whenever I've a flower or two to spare, 'tis so pitiful to think of un lying there with all his life spoilt for him."

The woman's voice quivered, and the hand that laid the roses on the grave trembled with emotion. It was not without a twinge of sharp physical pain that she straightened herself again. "There be only one grave more," she said, with a sigh that savoured of relief, "and then we come to my John's." The one grave more was represented by an upright slab of grey slate, hard and uncompromising.

"That be Sarah Luscomb's grave, her were

a sour tempered old maid, but her heart was in the right place. Her'd do kind things for other folk but in such a criss-cross way as nobody guesseed as they was done kindly. I was sorry for her because I knowed her meant well, and my John he often give her a rose, but her never said 'thank-ee kindly,' her just took 'em as if they was her own and yet I've seen her smelling at 'em as she walked away. I reckon I'll give her a few, I can't bear that the folks should think her'd no one to love her, and trim her grave."

The grave looked dilapidated enough in all conscience, one tall stinging nettle, possibly an emblem of the dead woman, stood up tall and straight beside the headstone. When the lodge-keeper had laid her three roses on the sod there were only four left of her once luxuriant posy.

She seemed as yet unaware of this fact, time was running on, and with so owat trembling steps she hurried to where a conspicuous granite headstone, lettered in gold, proclaimed itself as John's grave.

Then it was that the wrinkled face positively radiated happiness, the sunken faded grey eyes grew bright and alert as a bird's, the thin pursed-up lips beamed out into a smile. With a gesture of conscious pride she pointed with her cotton gloved hand.

"There," she said, "that be where my John lies and some day, please God, I'll lie along side of him, and there won't be no one to trim our graves then, no one, my dear, for though us prayed hard for a child, and was always reminding the Lord of Hannah, He never saw fit to grant our request. I ain't a quarrelling with the dispensation of Providence, of course the Almighty knows best, but us wanted a child badly."

Then as her eyes fell on all that were left of her roses, "Dear sakes," she exclaimed, "there be only vour left, and I plucked them all for John's grave. But then, I reckon he won't mind, he were always a rare hand at giving away."

Something like a sob choked the words, there was a ring of dismay in the piping treble voice. The girl laid a slim young hand on the old woman's arm.