things of human life which he had discovered, and to which he meant to work his way again as soon as possible. And what so helps one to believe in God as knowledge of the greatness of man?

Meantime, also, his mind was kept freshly and powerfully exercised. He had discarded his old way of looking at Nature and man's place in it; and of this fundamental change in him, no better proof could be given than the way in which he regarded the storm, as he left the breakfast-table this morning and went to the woods.

The damage was unreckonable. The trees had not been prepared against an event like that. For centuries some of them had developed strength in root and trunk and branch to resist the winds of the region when clad in all their leaves; or to carry the load of these leaves weighted with raindrops; or to bear the winter snows. Wise self-physicians of the forest! Removing a weak or useless limb, healing their own wounds and fractures! But to be buried under ice and then wrenched

and twisted by the blast — for this they had received no training: and thus, like so many of the great prudent ones who look hourly to their well-being, they had been stricken down at last by the unexpected.

"Once," said David reverently to himself, beholding it all, "once I should have seen in this storm some direct intention of the Creator toward man, even toward me. It would have been a reminder of His power; perhaps been a chastisement for some good end which I must believe in, but could not discover. Men certainly once interpreted storms as communications from the Almighty, as they did pestilence and famine. There still may be in this neighborhood people who will derive some such lesson from this. My father may in his heart believe it a judgment sent on us and on our neighbors for my impiety. Have not cities been afflicted on account of the presence of one sinner? Thankful I am not to think in this way now of physical law — not so to misconceive man's

place in Nature. I know that this sleet, so important to us, is but one small incident in the long history of the planet's atmosphere and changing surface. It is the action of natural laws, operating without regard to man, though man himself may have had a share in producing it. It will bring death to many a creature; indirectly, it may bring death to me; but that would be among the results, not in the intention."

He set his face to cross the wood — sliding, skating, steadying himself against the trunks, driving his heels through the ice crust. The exercise was heating; his breath rose as a steam before his face. Beyond the woods he crossed a field; then a forest of many acres and magnificent timber, on the far edge of which, under the forest trees and fronting a country lane, stood the schoolhouse of the district. David looked anxiously, as he drew near, for any signs of injury that the storm might have done. One enormous tree-top had fallen on the fence. A limb

had dropped sheer on the steps. The entire yard was little better than a brush heap. He soon turned away home relieved: he would be able to tell Gabriella to-night that none of the windows had been broken nor the roof; only a new woods scholar, with little feet and a big hard head and a bunch of mistletoe in one hand, was standing on the steps, waiting for her to open the door.

David's college experience had effected the first great change in him as he passed from youth to manhood; Gabriella had wrought the second. The former was a fragment of the drama of man's soul with God; the latter was the drama of his heart with woman.

It had begun the day the former ended — in the gloom of that winter twilight day, when he had quit the college after his final interview with the faculty, and had wandered forlorn and dazed into the happy town, just commencing to celebrate its season of peace on earth and good will to man. He had found her given up heart

and soul to the work of decorating the church of her faith, the church of her fathers.

When David met her the second time, it was a few days after his return home. He was at work in the smoke-house. The meat had been salted down long enough after the killing: it must be hung, and he was engaged in hanging it. Several pieces lay piled inside the door suitably for the hand. He stood with his back to these beside the meat bench, scraping the saltpetre off a large middling and rubbing it with red pepper. Suddenly the light of the small doorway failed; and turning he beheld his mother, and a few feet behind her — David said that he did not believe in miracles — but a few feet behind his mother there now stood a divine presence. Believe it or not, there she was, the miracle! All the bashfulness of his lifetime — it had often made existence well-nigh insupportable — came crowding into that one moment. The feeblest little bleat of a spring lamb too weak to

stand up for the first time would have been a deafening roar in comparison with the silence which now penetrated to the marrow of his bones. He faced the two women at bay, with one hand resting on the middling.

"This is my son," said his mother neutrally, turning to the young lady. This information did not help David at all. He knew who *he* was. He took it for granted that every one present knew. The visitor at once relieved the situation.

"This is the school-teacher," she said, coloring and smiling. "I have been teaching here ever since you went away. And I am now an old resident of this neighborhood."

Not a thing moved about David except a little smoke in the chimney of his throat. But the young lady did not wait for more silence to render things more tense. She stepped forward into the doorway beside his mother and peered curiously in, looking up at the smoke-blackened joists, at the black cross sticks on which the links

of sausages were hung, at the little heap of gray ashes in the ground underneath with a ring of half-burnt chips around them, at the huge meat bench piled with salted joints.

"And this is the way you make middlings?" she inquired, smiling at him encouragingly.

The idea of that archangel knowing anything about middlings! David's mind executed a rudimentary movement, and his tongue and lips responded feebly: —

"This is the way."

"And this is the way you make hams, sugar-cured hams?"

"This is the way."

"And this is the way you make — shoulders?"

"This is the way."

David had found an answer, and he was going to abide by it while strength and daylight lasted.

The young lady seemed to perceive that this was his intention.

"Let me see you *hang* one," she said

desperately. "I have never seen bacon hanged — or hung. I suppose as I teach grammar, I must use both participles."

David caught up the huge middling by the string and swung it around in front of him, whereupon it slipped out of his nerveless fingers and fell over in the ashes. It did not break the middling, but it broke the ice.

"Can I help you?"

Those torturing, blistering words! David's face got as red as though it had been rubbed with red pepper and saltpetre both. The flame of it seemed to kindle some faint spark of spirit in him. He picked up the middling, and as he looked her squarely in the eye, with a humorous light in his, he nodded at the pieces of bacon by the entrance.

"Hang one of those," he said, "if you've a mind."

As he lifted the middling high, Gabriella noticed above his big red hands a pair of arms like marble for lustre and whiteness (for he had his sleeves rolled

far back) — as massive a pair of man's arms as ever were formed by life-long health and a life-long labor and life-long right living.

"Thank you," she said, retreating through the door. "It's all very interesting. I have never lived in the country before. Your mother told me you were working here, and I asked her to let me come and look on. While I have been living in your neighborhood, you have been living in my town. I hope you will come to see me, and tell me a great deal."

As she said this, David perceived that she, standing behind his mother, looked at him with the veiled intention of saying far more. He had such an instinct for truth himself, that truth in others was bare to him. Those gentle, sympathetic eyes seemed to declare: "I know about your troubles. I am the person for whom, without knowing it, you have been looking. With me you can break silence about the great things. We can meet far above the level of such poor scenes as this. I have sought you to tell you this. Come."

"Mother," said David that evening, after his father had left the table, dropping his knife and fork and forgetting to eat, "who was that?"

He drew out all that could be drawn: that she had come to take charge of the school the autumn he had gone away; that she was liked as a teacher, liked by the old people. She had taken great interest in *him*, his mother said reproachfully, and the idea of his studying for the ministry. She had often visited the house, had been good to his father and to her. This was her first visit since she had gotten back; she had been in town spending the holidays.

David had begun to go to see Gabriella within a week. At first he went once a week — on Saturday nights. Soon he went twice a week — Wednesdays and Saturdays invariably. On that last day at college, when he had spoken out for himself, he had ended the student and the youth; when he met her, it was the beginning of the man: and the new reason of the man's happiness.

As he now returned home across the mile or more of country, having satisfied himself as to the uninjured condition of the schoolhouse, which had a great deal to do with Gabriella's remaining in that neighborhood, he renewed his resolve to go to see her to-night, though it was only Friday. Had not the storm upset all regular laws and customs?

Happily, then, on reaching the stable, he fell to work upon his plan of providing a shelter for the sheep.

David felt much more at home in the barn than at the house. For the stock saw no change in him. Believer or unbeliever, rationalist, evolutionist, he was still the same to them. Upon them, in reality, fell the ill consequences of his misspent or well-spent college life; for the money which might have gone for shingles and joists and more provender, had in part been spent on books describing the fauna of the earth and the distribution of species on its surface. Some had gone for treatises on animals under domestication, while his

own animals under domestication were allowed to go poorly fed and worse housed. He had had the theory; they had had the practice. But they apprehended nothing of all this. How many tragedies of evil passion brutes escape by not understanding their owners! We of the human species so often regret that individuals read each other's natures so dimly: let us be thankful! David was glad, then, that this little aggregation of dependent creatures, his congregation of the faithful, neither perceived the change in him, nor were kept in suspense by the tragedy growing at the house.

They had been glad to see him on his return. Captain, who had met him first, was gladdest, perhaps. Then the horses, the same old ones. One of them, he fancied, had backed up to him, offering a ride. And the cows were friendly. They were the same; their calves were different. The sheep about maintained their number, their increase by nature nearly balancing their decrease by table use.

One member of the flock David looked for in vain: the boldest, gentlest — there usually is one such. Later on he found it represented by a saddle blanket. After his departure for college, his mother had conceived of this fine young wether in terms of sweetbreads, tallow for chapped noses, and a soft seat for the spine of her husband. Even the larded dame of the snow-white sucklings had remembered him well, and had touched her snout against his boots; so that hardly had he in the old way begun to stroke her bristles, before she spoke comfortably of her joy, and rolled heavily over in what looked like a grateful swoon.

No: his animals had not changed in their feelings toward him; but how altered he in his understanding of them! He had formerly believed that these creatures were created for the use of man — that old conceited notion that the entire earth was a planet of provisions for human consumption. It had never even occurred to him to think that the horses were made but to

ride and to work. Cows of course gave milk for the sake of the dairy; cream rose on milk for ease in skimming; when churned, it turned sour, that the family might have fresh buttermilk. Hides were for shoes. The skin on sheep, it was put there for Man's woollens.

Now David declared that these beings were no more made for Man than Man was made for them. Man might capture them, keep them in captivity, break, train, use, devour them, occasionally exterminate them by benevolent assimilation. But this was not the reason of their being created: what that reason was in the Creator's mind, no one knew or would ever know.

"Man seizes and uses you," said David, working that day in his barn; "but you are no more his than he is yours. He calls you dependent creatures: who has made you dependent? In a state of wild nature, there is not one of you that Man would dare meet: not the wild stallion, not the wild bull, not the wild boar, not

even an angry ram. The argument that Man's whole physical constitution — structure and function — shows that he was intended to live on beef and mutton, is no better than the argument that the tiger finds man perfectly adapted to his system as a food, and desires none better. Every man-eating creature thinks the same: the wolf believes Man to be his prey; the crocodile believes him to be his; an old lion is probably sure that a man's young wife is designed for his maw alone. So she is, if he manages to catch her."

As David said this rather unexpectedly to himself, he fell into a novel revery, forgetting philosophy and brute kind.

It was late when David finished his work that day. Toward nightfall the cloud had parted in the west; the sun had gone down with dark curtains closing heavily over it. Later, the cloud had parted in the east, and the moon had arisen amid white fleeces and floated above banks of pearl. Shining upon all splendid things else, it illumined one poor scene

which must not be forgotten: the rear of an old barn, a sagging roof of rotting shingles; a few common sheep passing in, driven by a shepherd dog; and a big thoughtful boy holding the door open.

He had shifted the stock to make way for these additional pensioners, putting the horses into the new stalls, the cows where the horses had been, and the sheep under the shed of the cows. (It is the horse that always gets the best of everything in a stable.) He reproached himself that he did least for the creatures that demanded least.

"That's the nature of man," he said disapprovingly, "topmost of all brutes."

When he stepped out of doors after supper that night, the clouds had hidden the moon. But there was light enough for him to see his way across the ice fields to Gabriella. The Star of Love shone about his feet.