with his life that they seemed to have a sort of claim on him, as he gazed at the little cluster of rough, weather-beaten houses in the clearing, and heard the monotonous hum of the busy saw-mill, he felt a great lump rising in his throat, and the tears which had come unbidden so much of late could not be kept back.

"Gosh darn queer," he muttered as he looked sheepishly around to see if his weakness was observed, "a fellow kaint change camp 'thout sloppin' over 'bout it. I reckon Twid Beeber your kind o' homesick 'thout leavin' home, aint ye?" he continued, in a ludicrous attempt at self-raillery that was almost pathetic. "No, you aint homesick, but you miss yer gun, mabbe. Darn fool ter give that there gun to Jack Simms, Twid; you might jist as well tuk it with you!" Twid's heart jumped at this thought. Why not take it with him? Why not go back and ask Jack to give it back to him? Twid loved the old-fashioned muzzle-loader as if it had been a living, breathing thing. Year in and year out it had been his constant companion, lying by his side when he slept in camp, and standing in the chimney-corner, always in sight, during the brief intervals spent at home. It had been one of the hardest parts of his going away, the leaving behind of this old friend. But at the time, it had seemed to Twid that it must be done; and so, when he had carried it over to Jack Simms, and had received Jack's repeated assurances that the beloved gun should have the best of care, Twid had parted from it with a vague feeling that if he had deserted his old friend, he had at least found for it a comfortable place, where it would receive all due attentions. But now it seemed to him that he might take it along after all, and to think was to act with Twid. Impulsively he stepped from the little platform and started off with long strides for the little group of houses which graced the name of settlement. Approaching one of these that had an air of thrift and neatness about it which contrasted strangely with some of its neighbors, Twid waived the ceremony of a knock, and pushing open the plain, unpainted door, boldly entered, thereby much disturbing the equanimity of an almost featherless parrot who had been serenely dozing near the door. With a shrill scream and uplifted wings he darted at the intruder, only to be met half way by the bandanna and its contents. There was a momentary mixture of parrot and bag; and then with a grunt that bore a startling resemblance to "Damit," his parrotship beat a hasty retreat into the front room.

"Now, Jack Simms, why kaint you leave that there pol' pa'it alone? He aint got no fethers left now to speak on, along with your foolin'; 'sides it's gittin' nigh onto fly-time, an' he'l need all he's got. Your jist pesterin' the life,—Wal, I never! if it aint you, Twid Beeber! Laws sakes, when thet pa'it raised sich a rumpus, I thot in co'arse it was Jack," and Mrs. Simms dropped into a chair, and vigorously fanned herself with her apron. She was a large woman, and comfortably fat. Her red face was the perfection of good nature, and the laughing twinkle in her eyes softened perceptibly as she caught sight of Twid's long face. Even he caught the infection of her good nature, and allowed a faint smile to brighten his face for the instant; but it disappeared as quickly as he remembered his errand. Uneasily shifting his position, and ignoring the wooden chair pushed toward him, he began, "Missus Simms, I got ter thinkin' this morning, and ——" but he stopped short.

Mrs. Simms was laughing again, and her frank blue eyes, looking straight at him, slightly disconcerted him. "'There, now," she exclaimed, "never mind; I know what it is Twid; yer after that gun a'gin. Law, I know'd it the minit I sot eyes on you! Why, I says to Jack this mornin', says I, I don't b'lieve Twid '1 be satisfied ter leave that gun here; an I' told him ef yer came fer it, I guess you'd have to have it."

"An' what did he say ter that?" interrupted Twid, reluctant in the goodness of his heart to disappoint his friend.

"O, never you mind, Twid; Jack won't care," Mrs. Simms replied, reading his anxiety in his face. "'Why, lawsakes, boy, it's your gun; you only lent it ter my Jack. Jist wait and I git it