she went back and forth every day from the mills to her house on the river-bank mumbling her guttural nothings, with a mongrel cur, her only companion in life, sneaking his rheumaticy way at her heels. This latter nonenity had been variously styled "Frowser," "Hilarity," "Him," and "Crazy's purp," during different periods of his existence, and was quite as well known and as little thought of throughout the settlement as Mag herself. The latter name was his most familiar title; and though his early history was shaded in even a darker gloom than that of his mistress, no one had ever supposed him complimented by any of the appellations commonly given to the canine race.

He evidently got along quite as well without a name; and knowing Mag and her vagaries as well as he did, and being somewhat of a freak himself, he seemed to bear evidence, from the stump of his apologetic tail up through his gouty legs and the curly, sand-colored hair of his small body to the top of his unshapely head, that any attempt at an appropriate appellation symbolizing either his appearance or his qualities would be wholly unfruitful.

Mag's monomania was religion, which was the worst topic she could have chosen to popularize herself in New Epsom; and perhaps it was quite as much the subject of her talk, as the unsoundness of her ideas, that made every one avoid her, and forced her to explain and propound all her wanderings to her only harmonious companion, the purp. He did not mind this, however, any more than his nonentity, and stuck by Mag, week in and week out, through the winters and summers of her life. He knew her better than the rest, and appreciative of the general ignorance in regard to her, passed over the fact that her arms and neck were bony, her face and expression as meaningless as her gray-black hair was thin, and reconciled himself with the knowledge that whenever there was an extra bit for dinner, he would have his share of it, and that as long as Mag could work and earn her wages, he would never want. Then they were wholly in harmony; Mag was forever talking, and would obligingly carry on the conversation for both of them, while the purp never showed the slightest sign of desiring to speak, except in the neighborhood of the meal-hour. If, perhaps, he was a trifle impolite, and would go to sleep under the stove and thaw out his joints when he should have paid more attention to his side of the argument, at other times he would sit gazing at her from the watery depths of his eyes for hours, wrapped in the closest attention.

Moreover, neither of them made any codfish pretensions to aristocracy. The purp could probably have claimed descent from everything in the canine race; but as Mag never spoke of her family, he maintained his usual discreet silence, and left this and the delicate subject of their respective ages wholly undiscussed.

So they lived together quite as proper companions as imaginable, returning from the mill each night, dining together with as much luxury as finances would permit; and when the inner woman and the inner dog were supposed to be satisfied, Mag would clear away the dishes and arrange all in homelike fashion, after which the dog would comfortably establish himself, and she would either try to decipher some book, or hold forth to him on her great theme. "It's when we're kilt an' gone that I'm tellin' y'bout," she would say, her dull eyes taking on some spark of brilliancy, and her gaunt arms outstretched in emphasizing her speech. "It's when we're kilt. After we're all done an' buried, an' gon' never t'come back no more. Where we ain't never called hags nor nothin', an' where we see ev'ybody wez ever known. Ev'ybody wez ever known; do y'hear that? Ev'ybody what we used t'know ever er ever and He, an' all an' ev'ybody's all there'n glory everlastin'! An' o' course yez don't know what I'm sayin' exac'ly, an' whether dogs is there er not I ain't in knowledge of; but it certain seems t'me that they hought t'be, and