

were it not for hope, we shouldn't be good for much. Many a poor groaner has she clapped on the back, and made him leap to his feet and set his teeth together, and spring over obstacles as if he had on "seven-league boots." She is a little coquettish, but I like her. She has helped me out of many a hobble.

Well, as the great speakers say, this is a digression. Do you know what that is? It is leaving off what you are about, to dance off to something else—just as I did up there about hope. Now I'm going on!

One day the committee came to Cicely's school, to hear the scholars recite; and Cicely stood up in her patched gown as straight as she could, and recited her lessons.

One of the gentlemen who came in with the committee asked, "Who is that young girl who said her lessons so well?"

"Cicely Hunt?" he repeated, after the teacher,— "Cicely Hunt! She was not lame; and then—why—no—it can't be: the thing is quite impossible," and he leaned back in his chair, and looked at Cicely.

After school was over he said to her, "Do you sing, Cicely?"

"Not now," said Cicely, blushing, "I used to sing, a long while ago, when I was little."

"When, Cicely?"

"I sang to—to—my papa," said Cicely—tears springing to her eyes. "I used to sing 'Blue-eyed Mary,' for the gentlemen who dined with papa."

Then the gentleman (pretending to look out of the window) wiped his eyes, and turning to the teacher, they whispered a long while together, now and then looking at Cicely.

That evening, when Cicely and her mother were warming their fingers over a fire of shavings, somebody knocked at the door.

Cicely blushed, when she saw the same gentleman she had