

Friday, March 20, 1874.

THE LITTLE WIFE.

BY A. H. MORRISON.
The little wife laid her sewing down,
And looked at the clock and said:
"It is time that I put the kettle on,
And the cloth on the table spreads.
For the clock is near to the stroke of six,
And I've hardly time to see
That the kettle boils and the toast is made,
When John will be home to tea."

The table she drew to the easiest nook,
And she laid the plates for two,
But there were plain delf; there was silver
none;

And the dishes they were few,
"But butter and bread and some cake and
fruit,"

All dainty as they can be,

"And that is white," said the little wife,

"That is what John likes to see."

The little wife took out a dressing gown
And sat in a high-backed chair,
And before it a pair of slippers placed,
For too large for her to wear;

And she patted the gown and softly said:

"Lie there, that you may be—
For the night is cold—for John to put on,
When he shall come to tea."

The little wife smoothed and braided her
hair,

And put on a prettier dress,

A bit of soft lace and a knot of gray silk;

To find her beauty she had to smile,

Then she looked in the glass and blushed
and smiled.

And she was a fair picture to see!

John will be so pleased

With the dress when he comes home to tea."

But it must be late, the kettle has boiled,
And the toast is getting dry;

It is growing dark, and the street lamps
are shining.

But the footsteps all pass by.

The little wife peeps out the front hall door,

Then runs to the garden gate;

But he does not come, and "Oh, dear," she
cries,

"It is a tiresome thing to wait."

Then she tries to read, but whether or no
The tale was gloomy or gay,

She could not have told, for her rostles
thoughts,

were all a confused mass.

Again and again to the front hall door

She goes to look up the street,

Back far away footstep making her heart
With a hope to faster beat.

"Why if must be hours," said the little wife,

With a pout and an ugly frown,

"I'd like to know what at this time of
night."

John can do worse down town,

If he cared for me he would surely come,

But I've often heard it said—

And half believed it now—that's a man

Love's only till he wed.

"But it shall not know, if it breaks my
heart,"

I will have my ten—so there!"

Her tears are red, and her eyes are so
bright.

She looks at the vacant chair.

And her knife falls down, and "Oh, dear," she
says,

"An then she begins to cry.

"I wonder was over a six months' wife,

So miserable as I!"

"John never would stay if he was alive,"

The little wife sobbingly said,

"And so all this time I've been blaming
him."

It must be that John is dead,

"Why ble me, who's that?" says a manly
voice,

Tender as tender can be,

And the clock is just pointing to half-past
six,

And John has come home to tea.

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