

Dinner over he sat down, and spent the evening in calculating how best he could live on eighteen shillings a week, with a little extra at harvest-time—say a guinea, all told. Rent, half-a-crown; clothes and boots, five pounds a year at least—say two shillings a week. Remained, sixteen shillings and sixpence for everything. Fuel, candles, soap, odds and ends, would carry away half-a-crown of this. Fourteen shillings left for food and savings; for Alan was resolute on showing the rustics how to save. Say eighteenpence a day for food.

Food. What is food? Half-a-crown goes at the club for luncheon alone with great ease. He would want, he thought, a pound of meat, half a dozen potatoes, and a loaf of bread every day. There is eighteenpence gone at once. Tea, coffee, sugar, milk, butter, cheese, small groceries; all this had to come out of the odd sixpence. And how much would be left for saving? Every penny would have to be looked at, every tea-spoonful of tea hesitated over. And then the washing. The male mind does not at first understand the meaning of this item. Now it occurred to him that unless, in the dead of night, and with barred doors, he did his own washing, this charge would be the last straw to break the camel's back. And yet, with the washing before their eyes, the labourers found money to spend at the Spotted Lion. It must come out of his meat. Overcome with the prospect, Alan folded up his paper and went to bed.

In the morning he had a beautiful dream. He was walking hand in hand with Miranda in a flowery meadow, in whose hedges highly-cultured peasants had planted geraniums, standard and monthly roses, rhododendrons, hydrangeas, dahlias, and the stately hollyhocks, which raised their heads and blossomed among the hawthorn, honeysuckle, and straggling blackberry. Beneath them, on the banks, flowered mignonette, verbena, heliotrope, and all sorts of sweet flowers, growing apparently wild. The grass amid which they walked was luxuriant and long, and bright with buttercups and cowslips. Round them, as they walked hand in hand under a sunny sky, sat, walked, or played the villagers, engaged in various occupations, all of which demanded the Higher Culture. For one, clad in a smock-frock, scrupulously clean, was reading Mr. Pater's "Studies of the Renaissance;" another, similarly attired,

was studying Darwin's "Descent of Man;" another, an older man, was sitting, brow bent, and pencil in hand, with which he made marginalia over Mill's "Political Economy;" a fourth was composing music;" a fifth was collecting specimens in the hedges for a *hortus siccus*. Of the girls, three were standing together in the attitude of the Graces, only daintily attired, singing part songs, with clasped hands; some were making embroidery for their Sunday frocks, and one was reading Ruskin's "Fors Clavigera" aloud for the benefit of those who embroidered. Of the younger men, one in a corner by himself was declaiming, Shakespeare in hand; another was airily reading that sweet, and simple, and musical poem called "Sordello," singing from its rippling measures, as he brushed away the dew across the upland lawn; another was correcting the proofs of a Note on the village archæology, which traced the connection of the parish pump with the Roman occupation—these proofs were destined for the *Academy*; another was catching swiftly and deftly with brush and paper the ever-changing effects of cloud and sunshine on the river; the blacksmith was writing a *villanelle*; and the schoolmaster was guessing a double acrostic. The elder ladies, assisted by the oldest inhabitant of the village, Methusalem Parr, were engaged in committing to paper the folk-lore of the district with a view of sending it to the editor of *Melusine*. Among the *märchen* thus set down for the first time was the nursery story of a Pig, a Porcupine, and a Piper, which afterwards became famous, and was traced to the very foot of the Himalayas, where the inhabitants believed that it descended from Heaven. Just as Alan was explaining to Miranda the honour and glory which this relic of old-world story would confer upon the Village of Weyland, his dream grew a little troubled. The young men and the maidens got confused before his eyes; the meadow grew cloudy; the villagers all seemed to start asunder in terror; books, pens, pencils, all were thrown aside, and they fled multivious with oaths and shrieks, which were not loud and coarse, but low and cultured. Then the meadow changed itself into a small whitewashed room, there was no Miranda at all, and he was lying in his cottage bedroom, alone.

"Ting-a-ring-ting!" — was ever alarum more wildly irritating? He sprang from his