partial to her society. I think I regarded her as a piece of quite unobjectionable but by no means interesting household furniture.

My favourite haunt was a piece of ground known in Chapter parlance as 'the debatable land,' a, plot of about two acres in extent adjoining, and only partially fenced off from the Deanery grounds, respecting which there was some little uncertainty as to whether it was actually a part of the private grounds of the Deanery, or whether it belonged to the Chapter. In times past I believe this uncertainty had given rise to heart-burnings, even to quarrels, upon which it was said local lawyers had thriven amazingly. But this had never been in the days of my liberal, genial-tempered father. What did it matter, he said, whether the ground belonged to him or the Chapter? His gardeners could easily give it all the attention it needed, and it was a fine place for the Chapter babies and nurses, they were out of the way of the soldiers, and there was plenty of shade.

This was my general resort. I could cut sticks, or do anything disorderly, without dread of suddenly encountering the wrathful glare of the head gardener. The time for babies being past, I now betook myself thither to meditate undisturbed. There was, however, a door in the wall which separated the debatable land from the public road, and coming from certain directions the route was a short cut to the Close.

I had not long established myself on a favourite seat when I heard the click of the door latch, followed by footsteps approaching, and shortly there emerged from the shrubs which hid the door from my sight, one of the minor canons, and, to my great satisfaction, one for whom I had a special regard.

'What, Vera,' he said, ' safe home? How many times did Flash bolt to-day?'

'Three times. He was very fresh; but he did not get into the hedge, though it would not have mattered, for Waters had tied my hair up tight. He did pull very hard though. But please sit down, Mr. Charlcote, if you are not in a hurry. I want to ask you a question.'