

The Village Blacksmith.

was his second son, George. The eldest son had been an apprentice with his father for a couple of years already, and the intention was that he should succeed to the business. But the father knew that the smithy could not afford decent comfort, such as he had enjoyed himself, to more than one, and therefore, when the destination of the second boy came to be decided, he was sorely puzzled. An opening in Arderholm was inconceivable, and there seemed, therefore, no alternative but that the boy should leave home.

This prospect, however, appeared in a very different light to the smith from that which would be present to most fathers now. Even at the present day, indeed, there are remote rural districts where you may come upon people, especially the poor, who have never been farther from their own door than they could walk in a single day, and have never spent the night in a strange bed. But this class is becoming rarer every year. The difficulties and hardships of travel are rapidly disappearing under the beneficent applications of science. Men are generally becoming more accustomed to move about the world, to live at intervals away from home ; and the removal of friends to a considerable distance does not involve the hopeless separation, the dismal out-