

ing a promontory, high, bold, and rocky on one side, and with a low and gently curving shore on the other. The road lay between high hedges, and here and there was a small hamlet or a solitary farm. Presently a dip in the road brought them into a small sheltered valley, and here, nestling under the hillside, lay a small village, "just like you see in pictures," commented Ruth, as she noted the grey cottages, with their bright gardens, the little green with its pond, whereon ducks and geese were enjoying an evening swim, a substantial church, and trim vicarage.

"How pretty it all is!" she said. "And what beautiful trees!"

"Yes, the trees are in Brunt Dale Park, that belongs to another of the family, our master's far-away cousin. Long ago Old Hall was the place where the Atherfields lived, but one of them got a fancy 'twas too cold and bleak, and so he built the house and enclosed the park, and since then the family has drifted apart, till, though they're cousins still, Old Hall and Brunt Dale Park scarcely knows one another. Ah, pity, pity! Evenin', Mr. Harker."

"Good-evening, Mr. Choules," replied a pleasant-looking old man, who stood smoking his pipe by his garden gate.

"Why, you're late home this evenin'," said his wife, who, with a pretty, fair, curly-haired girl, was stooping over the bright flower border which ran on either side of the path to the house door.

"Ay," was the only response; and Abraham gave his horse a sharp cut with the whip, and sent it on at a quicker pace.

"Disagreeable old man!" said the young girl. "Why couldn't he have stopped and given me a chance of seeing who he's got with him?"

"A new maid for his mistress, I reckon; there's many changes going on there. She was a nice tidy-looking girl," replied the mother.

"Well, I thought she looked a terrible dowdy, with that plain hat, and her hair brushed so smooth and straight, but she'd have been better than nobody to speak to."

"'Tisn't everybody has got my Bessie's curly locks," said John Harker, looking lovingly at his pretty daughter.

"Ay, and 'tisn't everybody that's got your Bessie's vanity neither," retorted the wife. "Now, to my thinking, that girl was just as nice as she could be; she'd got something better than good looks in her face."

In the meantime the travellers were climbing a steep hill. "You may say good-bye to trees now," remarked the old man; "we leave them behind us in the village." And the remark was true, for as they mounted higher and higher, even the hedges got lower and smaller, and at length they emerged from the lane on to a road which ran across the open down.

"Oh, how beautiful!" exclaimed Ruth, as the view of the coast suddenly broke upon her, with its rocky cliffs broken here and there into little coves and bays; while the sea, which glimmered in the evening glow, showed huge piles of rocks, fashioned by the waves into every conceivable fantastic shape, raising their grim heads above the heaving water.

"Ay, ay, that's what folks say when they sees it in the summer, but wait till you see the waves lashing round the sides of those rocks in the winter gales; there ain't much beauty in 'em then, I can tell you. You've heard tell of the Rocks of Brampton, I daresay. Well, that's Brampton Cove over yonder. 'Tis bad luck for a ship that gets too near Brampton Rocks; and the cliffs go sheer down to the water. Once you go over 'tis all up with you; there's nothing to rest on till you get to the bottom. And now here we are. Go you in at that