

duties as neighbours were concerned, they seemed to take a pride in repaying to the full any assistance or act of kindness rendered to them.

Sometimes little quarrels or disputes had arisen about the trespassing of their own or other persons' cattle, and similar little grievances which will arise; but these differences had usually been settled without any difficulty, perhaps, owing to the pacific character and concession of Mr. Purdee, who preferred to suffer a little wrong sooner than live in a state of unpleasantness, say nothing of open hostility, which he justly feared would be the result of exacting opposition to his neighbour's views. Such had been their relations for several years, when a circumstance occurred which occasioned a serious disruption between the two families and a total cessation of all friendly intercourse.

One Sunday evening, on his return home from chapel, Mr. Purdee noticed two men crouched under the wall of a small meadow which lay in front of his house. The moon was nearly at the full, and he could distinguish sufficient of their dress and general appearance to justify him in suspecting them to be the two eldest sons of Crooks. He stood at the gate of the field a short time watching them, but, as they did not move, he went to the house. He had not been at home many minutes before his sons Samuel and David arrived, and he mentioned what he had seen. We may here premise that at this time there was a great deal of poaching practised all around the country. In fact, the poachers were so numerous, and their prosecution so vigorous, that, to "insure" themselves against emergencies, they actually, in some localities, established a "protective fund." It was usually considered a dangerous business to meddle, in the way of interference, with this class of game-stealers, and very few could be found to "peach" or inform against them. Mr. Purdee's sons suspected at once, from their father's description, that the two men were Dan and Ben Crooks, engaged in some poaching business, although up to this time they had never seen them actually engaged in that way. But, more to satisfy their curiosity in this respect than from any other motive, they quietly left the house by the back

door, and creeping along in the shadow of the high walls, arrived near the spot indicated in time to hear the squeak of a hare; and, carefully raising themselves above the level of the wall, saw Ben Crooks in the very act of taking up a hare, which had been snared in one of the square openings left in the walls for the passage of sheep when it is required to drive them from one pasture to another. These openings are usually closed by flagstones; but, by placing these awry, an aperture is left sufficient for the passage of hares and rabbits, and in these small apertures the snares are set for entrapping the game. The Purdees were looking over the wall in the rear of the poacher, and might have withdrawn without being seen by Ben or his brother, had not the sudden displacement of one of the cope-stones startled the poachers and disclosed to them the unpleasant fact that they were being watched. Now, predatory animals do not like to be detected in their acts of spoliation, and those of the man species are by no means exceptions to this rule.

Ben was not only disconcerted, but angry, and charged the Purdees with being spies and informers.

"We are neither spies nor informers," said David Purdee.

"What are you doing here then?" said Ben. "What business have you to be watching us?" "Why Ben" said Samuel Purdee, "you forget that this is our field and not yours. If you want to turn poachers, why don't you stay on your own farm? and more especially so on a Sunday night. I am not so particular about poaching as some folks are; but I would let it alone such a night as this, if it were perfectly lawful. But, anyhow, if you will poach stay on your own place to do it, and I'll guarantee we shall neither watch you nor inform about you." "And I'll say more," said David, "if you do what is right, nobody can inform against you." "All very nice talking," said a voice from the other side of the wall, and at the same moment Dan scrambled up to view. "You see we shall just do as we please, and when we please. As to our poaching in your fields, why, if you object we must go elsewhere; but I think, that comes of going so much to chapel. Nobody but chapel goes