

Now all was bustle and confusion, shouting eagerly for boxes, carpet-bags, &c., a nervous elderly lady keeping up a most determined squeal, in the hope that some one would remove her from her uncomfortable seat. A dog yelping from the roof, a child screaming from some hidden corner of the old conveyance, made a scene in that quiet little village, only to be surpassed by the arrival of a long expected express train at London or Birmingham. Ten minutes saw every thing settled, and Mr. Clarence Nugent busy in removing the dust that had accumulated to no inconsiderable extent upon his garments. The old lady and child had removed to a relation's house hard by, and the stage had crawled onward towards Edensor.

Clarence having arranged his attire to his satisfaction, threw open the window to inhale the fresh country air. What a view lies before him, one of the most luxuriant parks that England can boast of. To the right all is rugged and wild, huge rocks of grey stone jutting out from the hill sides, covered with beech, mountain ash, fir, elm and oak trees; through the centre of the scene runs the river Derwent, now flowing softly under the shade of nut trees and honeysuckle, now sparkling in the sun, rolling, purling, dancing along, as tho' the wood-nymphs had been sporting in its limpid stream, and been robbed of their merriment. To the left, along the river's bank, all is smooth and lawn like, studded over to the very hill tops, with deer of every kind. Further on stands the Palace, a noble edifice of light grey stone, with its thousand fountains, its conservatories, orangeries and gardens of every clime, backed by the stand Wood of beech, elm, and fir trees; the wood rising abruptly to the height of about two hundred feet, dark and dense in foliage, forming a fine background to the beauties of the Palace and its parterres. Clarence was one of those young men (and I like such a man) who feel the meaning of a lovely scene glide to their very soul, that, for a time, holds the brain in a dreamy musing of unspotted bliss.

"Come in," said Clarence, as a knock at the door interrupted his musing; the door opened, and Mr. Broomhead, the host, entered. "Will you dine, sir?"

"Thank you I have dined; but tell me, landlord, does this river afford sport to anglers?"

"Splendid trout, sir, splendid, and Mrs. Broomhead knows well how to dish them."

"Then I shall sup off trout." And Clarence immediately betook himself to the river's banks to indulge in that quiet yet exciting sport, fly fishing. The shades of evening were far advanced when Clarence commenced throwing his fly, and by the time he reached Queen Mary's Bower, his basket was pretty well furnished. He had now come close to a fine clump of elm and beech trees, when snap, splash and a jerk told plainly that a fine trout was his game. Round

flies the wynch, and for some minutes Clarence almost doubted the strength of his line; it slackens, and the fish rises to the surface of the water totally exhausted, the landing net is lowered, the fish secured and tossed out on to the grass.

"What a beautiful fish!" exclaimed a voice from amongst the trees. Clarence started, looked about, no one was to be seen near him. Now a titter was heard, and a stifled laugh, coupled with the word, "Blanche, dear, do not be so rude."

Clarence thought he had never before heard so sweet a voice, so full, soft and soul thrilling; he pretended to re-adjust his tackle in the hope of again hearing its silvery tone. "What would I not give," thought Clarence, "to have that voice always to speak to me; what a heaven of bliss 'twould raise in the path of any man; a constant sweetness. I must enquire of the landlord who they are." And Clarence now in reality put up his tackle, shouldered his basket, and prepared for home. Instead of returning the way he came, his curiosity led him round by where he fancied the ladies sat. He had not advanced many paces, when a low, snarling growl bade him beware.

"Carlo, lie down, sir, be quiet." And Clarence stopped, satisfied that 'twas no nymph of the woods that spoke so sweetly. "Be not alarmed, ladies, I pray, but if you can do so, will you be kind enough to inform me of the nearest path to the Peacock Inn."

"If you cross the bridge just below here, and keep the path to the right, it will, I believe, lead you through the garden."

Clarence was disappointed at receiving this answer from another lady than the one who had first spoken; he wished them good evening, betook himself home, firmly resolved to sup off trout for the next month, should his landlord not be able to give him satisfactory information, and leave the completion of his wishes to his own exertions.

The young lady whose beautiful voice had so enchanted Clarence, was the second of three sisters residing with their parents within the precincts of the Park. The father, a Mr. Goodwill, was an honest open handed English gentleman, ever ready to cheer the dispirited, help the sick, and raise the fallen to the utmost of his power. He was steward, secretary, attache, in fact everything to his master—the Lord of the Manor, the Duke of—, and so well did these men understand each other's nature, that constant intercourse had become almost essential to their happiness. Mrs. Goodwill, a tolerable lady in many respects, had more failings than good qualities in her composition. She was, before meeting with her lord, an orphan living upon the bounty of an aunt, who at that time was house-keeper to a gentleman of title. How, when or where Mr. Goodwill first met with the lady of his choice is not in my power to tell, but suffice to say that the aunt, upon Mr. Goodwill undertaking to share all his future joys with her niece, and having herself witnessed the tying of that knot which either adorns or

galls those bold enough to undergo the ordeal, handed to Mr. Goodwill the handsome sum of seventy-five thousand pounds.

About the time when my tale commenced Mrs. Goodwill was verging on her forty-seventh year, and though a decent education had been afforded her, she never imbibed much taste for intellectual amusements. Having outlived her youthful bloom and recreations, she now aimed at a life in London; its balls, theatres, soirees, &c., &c. might, she thought in part, make up for the years spent in the country; but Mr. Goodwill being an easy going satisfied sort of man, and moreover, firmly attached to his master's welfare, always turned a deaf ear to his wife's solicitations upon this one subject. Upon the evening of Clarence's arrival in Baslow, Mrs. Goodwill had been using the whole force of her argumentative powers in favor of removal to London. Mr. Goodwill firmly and tenderly replied that he could not entertain the idea at all, and requested his wife to wait until more favorable circumstances should present themselves. Mrs. Goodwill became instantaneously morose and sulky—the young ladies perceiving a storm rising procured their sunbonnets, and retired to the Park; 'twas thus they met with Clarence. On their return home that evening they did not fail to laugh at his perplexity in endeavoring to ascertain the precise locality in which they were sitting, and finally his being called to order by Carlo. Mr. Goodwill was informed of the stranger's arrival, and it was arranged they would all call on him in the morning. How little did Clarence on retiring to rest that night anticipate the joys of the morrow.

CHAPTER II.

Clarence rose the morning after his first meeting with the Misses Goodwill, full of that buoyant, youthful hope that swells the heart of every man, when he, for the first time, feels the influence and beauty of woman's charms.

Mr. Broomhead had not thought it prudent to answer Clarence's questions respecting the Goodwill family, though he knew, perhaps, more of them than any one in the village; yet, he knew little of Clarence, and felt disinclined to lay a trap for himself, in giving information that might be for a bad end.

The morning repast at an end, all was in busy preparation for a day's fishing; and many a flattering idea was entertained of again meeting his charmer of the previous evening.

Here we will leave Clarence to the enjoyment of his favourite sport, and return to Mr. Goodwill's house, known as the Finery. Emily Goodwill, the eldest sister, strikes one as being very plain-looking, and bears a certain expression on her countenance, indicating a bad temper: of rather dark complexion, deep hazel eyes, surmounted by a pair of thick eyebrows, black hair, and