

tired standing. The gentleman's umbrella either dripped down my back or caught in my bonnet, while the political conversation went on for many a weary mile. It appeared that Sir Robert Peel had done something very wrong in Parliament, and had fallen in the gentleman's estimation very much on that account. I remember wondering if Sir Robert would be sorry. He talked about the rabble and the common people till I looked up at him to see if he was far above the common himself. I saw a man very straight and stiff, buttoned up to the chin, with a hard, red, clean-shaved face—indeed his face looked as raspy as if it had been scraped, and I concluded somehow that he had been in the army. I knew I was right when I heard him talk of the "Iron Duke" as one talks of a friend, referring often to the time "when we were on the Peninsula," or, when censuring Sir Robert Peel, "if the Duke had the management of affairs, sir, he would know how to keep the rabble down. A man like the Duke has resources within himself; he always rises equal to the occasion. Men like him, who know how to command, and, better still, how to compel obedience, should be at the head of affairs." Every little while he would shake his head over Sir Robert's political crimes and say, "Peel's a rat—Peel's a rat," and I longed to ask him how could that be and the gentleman a baronet and a member of Parliament. Wondering at this helped to divert my mind from my own weariness, till at last one of the passengers remained at an inn where we stopped, and I got his seat. We came to a place on our journey where the road ran through a peat moss. The peat had been cut away on each side till only the road remained, running like a broad wall through the moss.

"A dangerous piece of road this on a dark night," said Uncle Tom.

"The authorities should have a

wall built on each side to prevent accident happening to His Majesty's subjects," said our military friend.

"We might as well be driving on the wall of Babylon," said Uncle Tom, laughing.

I looked down into the black depths, dotted with heaps of turf, piled up ready for drawing home, and thought, with terror, "What if the car should go too near the edge and fall over with us into the black depths below!"

"The mail coach is coming," said Uncle Tom.

Yes, there it was, sure enough, bowling along behind us at a great rate, drawn by four brown horses, that held up their heads and came spanking on as if drawing His Majesty's mail was fun and they liked it.

The coach was crowded with passengers, and looked top-heavy. The coachman, in his drab topcoat, with its large cape, flourished his whip; the guard blew loudly on his bugle a merry warning to clear the way. The road was wide enough to allow the coach to pass, but to my unaccustomed eyes it seemed too narrow, and there was no fence at either side.

Our driver had thrashed and shouted and sworn at his poor beast all morning, but he now stood up to put more vim into his performance, determined not to let the coach pass. It was right behind us now, the heads of the leaders—a terrible sight to me—almost touching us, champing their bits and sprinkling us with foam. On whichever side the coach tried to pass our driver kept before it, making his horse prance from side to side, leering round with his tongue out, enquiring of the coach driver if he wanted to pass, shouting back insult and defiance like one possessed. The two passengers who had been drinking with him cheered him on. The driver of the coach was pale with anger, but held in his temper as he did his horses, although I, in my terror, thought they would jump on us