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THE MONKS OF THELEMA.

BY WALTER BESANT AND JAMES RICE.

*Authors of 'Ready-Money Mortiboy,' 'The Golden Butterfly,' 'By Celia's Arbour,' etc., etc.*

CHAPTER X.

"Methinks it were a happy life,  
To be no better than a homely swain."

"WELL, sir," Bailiff Bostock said, "if you really do mean it, and will take and work with the men—— Do you mean it—just as you say, and no favour?"

"I mean just what I say. I shall begin to-morrow, and am here now to learn my duties for the day?"

Alan was determined there should be no more loss of a day.

"You can't follow the plough, that wants practice; and you can't manage the engine, that wants training."

The bailiff rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

"There's a stack of hay we're going to cut into to-morrow; but I can't send you up the ladder, atop o' that great stack. Sure as two-pence you'd fall down and break something. Can you drive, Squire?"

"Of course I can."

"Then I'll tell you what you shall do. It is a dirty job, too ——"

"Never mind how rough it is."

"I think you will be able to manage it, for the first job, better than anything else. You come here to-morrow morning, at six sharp, and I'll find you a day's work, never fear."

With this assurance, Alan was fain to be content. He then proceeded, being thoroughly ashamed of the morning's fiasco, to guard against a repetition of it. With this view he hired a boy to call him at five sharp, got a ventilator for his bedroom and an alarm clock, which he set for five o'clock. He next purchased a new kettle, and provided such materials for breakfast as he would eat, deferring the cold pork until such time as he should become hardened to the bread of affliction.

It was five o'clock in the afternoon when these arrangements were finally completed. He remembered that he had dinner to get, bought a beefsteak and potatoes, and proceeded, with such slender art as was at his command, to grill the former and boil the latter. The potatoes came out hard, but he had eaten horse beefsteak in America.