

thoughts, but it was good to him that the clouds should have parted just then. From where he stood, he looked across the lawn towards the west side of the park. And, presently, there came a sound of distant voices, and from the darkness of the trees issued forth a little crowd of people.

There were about twenty of them, and of these two or three were women. They came, talking in undertones, across the lawn in the pale moonlight, and were about to turn off towards the servants' quarters, when Sandy called softly.

"Is that you, Dingle?"

"Yes, Mr. Sandy," came the old man's voice, and he forgot to correct his mistake.

"Come this way, will you?"

There was Dingle and his fat daughter Sally; there were a Puddifant, two Linters, and old Buzzard, the village patriarch.

They came and stood under the window, and Dingle made a speech.

"We have been waiting for news at the 'Sheepshearers,'" he said, tears standing on his cheeks, his voice shaking, "and it came half an hour ago—one of the stable-boys brought it—and—we drank his health, my lord, and yours, and then my girl Sally suggested we should come and—and tell you——" He broke off and Sally went on, her arm through his, for he was failing of late:

"We knew, my lord, that you would not take offence—that you don't mind our having the feeling of friends as well as of—tenants——"

Sandy cleared his throat.

"Wait a moment," he said. "I will fetch him."

Five minutes later the little band had trooped quietly into the study, the window was shut, and Sandy stood before them with his son in his arms.

Tears stood in his lined cheeks, as he bent over the little bundle.

"My friends," he said, "here is my son."

Then they all tiptoed towards him, and looked at the queer little crumpled face of their future lord.

"Yes, he is beautiful, isn't he?" Sandy agreed proudly "he weighs over eight pounds. He is a particularly fine boy."

After a pause he went on: "I don't know how to tell you