

"For His Majesty's birthday," replied John. "This is the day, you know, and this is the way the horses used to coom into the Red Lion at Ashford; and the Major likes to see it still,—that's Major Meredith, you know. We'll be at 'The Elms' in a jiffy."

"Ah," said Captain Percival, "I thought it was about time we should be getting near there. That's my halting-place for to-night."

"Oh, then, your honour knows him,"—said John, with great interest.

"No, I have never met him," was the reply; "but he's one of my father's oldest friends. My baggage can go on to Newark, all but my valise and that small box, which is Miss Meredith's property. I suppose the Major's pretty sure to be at home?"

"That he is, sir, for this is trainin' day, you know, and the Major's a great hand for keeping the volunteers in drill. The fellows about here 'll stand fire with any in the country. And will your honour be going on with us next trip?" inquired John, unwilling to part company with his military passenger.

"Oh, I shall go on in a day or so; but I hope Hector's foot will be well enough to carry me the rest of the way, and then I shall be independent of wheels."

"All the better for your honour; and when you get to the Major's you won't be leaving it in a hurry. He's mighty glad to see gentlemen of the army, is the Major, as well