

Before daylight, the young man with a lantern in his hand, groped his way through the grounds, and along the road to the place where the lambs were kept. There his quick artistic taste, and firm light touch in preparing the coats of his charges, astonished the old shepherd, who looked on with interest. "Why sir," he said, "they told me as you could na' handle naught but a paint brush on a picture, and here, I never saw your father himself handle a pair of shears like that. We shall be proud of ye yet, that we shall."

As for the old squire, he was so pleased that his son should be taking more interest in some branch of the farming, that he was warm in his encouragement. And when he found that the pens were really bespoken for the show, and the shepherd quite excited at the idea of taking the lambs all the way to London, a twinkle lighted up his keen blue eyes, and he rubbed his hands, saying to himself: "Why who'd have thought it of Harold? he flies high he does. Now if it had been Charles I should not have been so surprised, because he always took to the farming."

Here recollections crowding the old man's memory, he sat quiet for a long time, whilst the frequent use of his large colored silk pocket-handkerchief showed that his thoughts were anything but happy. Much as he loved his second son, he could never get over the fall of all the fond hopes centred on the eldest. Only seemed yesterday that the little curly-headed rascal was toddling about at his knee, loud in his rapture at calf or colt, and in his prattling way telling his father what a great farmer he would grow up to be. Whilst with Harold it had been different, if he only had a piece of paper or a pencil, he was quite happy trying even as a child to sketch some curly-tailed pig or round-eyed calf.

CHAPTER III.

With the departure of the lambs for London, there came a fresh period of suspense and solitude for Harold.

Doing nothing but tramp about the farms all day, and add up accounts with his father all the evening, he was just beginning to feel life insufferably dull, when the monotony was cheered by the intelligence that the lambs had won the first prize at the Agricultural Show in London. "Shake hands, my boy," said the old Squire trembling with excitement, "you have indeed lived for something. Here I have been these many years gaining silver cups from all the neighbouring shows, and right proud I have been of them," and the old man cast a longing look at the bright array of silver goblets on the sideboard. "But never has a Newton aspired to winning anything in London, that's quite out of my beat. Its nigh upon thirty years since I was up in town, but bless me if I don't run up and have a look at those young upstarts."

When Harold saw that his father's lips were smiling and his eyes shining as had not seen them since the loss of Charles, he felt that glow of pleasure in his heart which comes sooner or later to all those, who in any way try to do something for the sake of others.

Harold indeed won some fruit of the great sacrifice of his London life. Here was some sunshine of success after the heavy dew of depression.

Cheered with the good news about the lambs, Harold at last made his way to the vicarage. There he was most kindly received, but he noticed that Patience was paler and thinner than during those happy days of last autumn.

Both the mother and daughter were delighted to hear of the young man's success, and the elder lady looking kindly at the young man said in her sweet gentle voice:

"You have not told us what has become of our old friend the picture; have you buried it?"

"Yes," said Harold gloomily, "as far as I am concerned, I have buried it in the past with all my hopes."

"Why you are taking a gloomy view of things," returned Mrs. Dacres, and I think it is very unkind to us to put away the picture like that, just because it was unsuccessful. A friend of our's, an artist, is coming to Arundel to-morrow for the sake of his painting. He and you would get on very well together; so, as he will be here to dinner next Saturday, why don't you come too? Bring the picture in the trap, and perhaps he will be able to give you some advice about it."

Harold looked doubtful, but his eyes falling upon the face of Patience turned expectantly towards him, he said, "you are very kind, Mrs. Dacres, I will get my father to spare me that evening, but you know being so much alone has made me a perfect bear. "Well we shall have quite a Zoological Garden," was the laughing reply, "for this artist is named Lyon." So with cheerful good-byes Harold left the vicarage with the promise to come to dinner.

However, the young man had not gone far along the lane, when his pleasant thoughts were exchanged for anxious and jealous ones about the coming visitor. Harold made up his mind that this artist fellow would wish to paint Patience. No doubt he was young, rich and handsome, and falling in love with her, would marry her in no time.

Even the beauty of the early spring brought no pleasure to the poor fellow now. It only seemed to taunt him with thoughts of his imaginary rival, who was coming to paint its lovely effects.

The soft brownish purple look of the undulating woodland ready to burst into leaf, the beautiful coloring of the sky, and the emerald green of the pasture land were all sources of irritation to him, as he thought how the painter would delight on them.

By the time the following Saturday had arrived, Harold had worked himself up into a state of jealous dislike towards the artist visitor at the vicarage.

(To be continued.)

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