

"Wi' Pastor Yates at his post tu, tryin' so hard to larn us all better!" panted Cramphorn.

Now ahead loomed a huge black object where crossways met at a lonely spot nearly a mile inland. It was empty and proved to be the skeleton of a farm waggon painted black, boarded up, and adorned with tufts of shavings dipped in tar. The snow had been trampled for twenty yards round about it and indications of other wheels diverged landward on three sides into the night.

Cramphorn, Godbeer and Robert Bluett, now far ahead of their companions, stood before this spectacle.

"They've done you, by G—!" gasped the old man. "An' to think of all your bold heroes with theer swords an' cutlasses an' pistols a-sitting freezing in every lane and by every drain an' rat-hole around the village! 'Tis amazin' such things be allowed to fall out."

The officer did not answer. He had seen the ancient and Godbeer grin amiably each upon the other, and now his thick skull appreciated the truth and he turned to chew his gall alone.

Merry Jonathan shouted after him.

"Ten to one they'll tell 'e that Maypole chap as walked in front of the funeral was a man by the name of Godbeer. But don't you b'lieve it, Cap'n. You'll never catch me an' Master Cramphorn in no such job."