

So he answered coldly, "You must take your own way, Stephen. I am an old man. I have had my say in my generation, maybe I haven't any right to meddle with yours. New men, new times." Then, being conscious that he was a little ungenerous, he walked off to Mrs. Sandal, and left the lovers together. Steve would have forgiven the squire a great deal more for such an opportunity, especially as a still kinder after-thought followed it. For he had not gone far before he turned, and called back, "Bring Steve into the house, Charlotte. He will stay, and have a bit of supper with us, no doubt." But Sandal was not an unjust man; and having given them the opportunity, he did not blame them for taking it. Besides he could trust Charlotte.

During supper the conversation turned again to Stephen's future plans. Whether the squire liked to admit the fact or not, he was deeply interested in them; and he listened carefully to what the young man said.

"If I am going to trust to sheep, squire, then I may as well have plenty to trust to. I think of buying the Penghyll 'walk,' and putting a thousand on it."

"My song, Stephen!"

"I can manage them quite well. I shall get more shepherds, and there are new ways of doing things that lighten labour very much. I have been finding out all about them. I think of taking three thousand fleeces, at the very least, to Bradford next summer."

"Don't be in a hurry, my lad. There are some things in life that are worth a deal more than money,—things that money cannot buy. Let money take a backward place." Then he voluntarily asked about the processes of spinning and weaving wool, and in spite of his prejudices was a little excited over Stephen's startling statements and statistics.

Indeed, the young man was so interesting, that Sandal went with him to the hall-door, and stood there with him, listening to his graphic descriptions of the wool-rooms at the top of the great Yorkshire mills. "I'd like well to take you through one, squire. Fleeces? You would be wonder-struck. There are long staple and short staple: silky wool and woolly wool; black fleeces from the Punjaub, and curly white ones from Bombay; long warps from Russia, short ones from Buenos Ayres; little Spanish fleeces, and our own Westmoreland and Cumberland skins that beat everything in the world for size. And then to see them turned into cloth as fast as steam can do it! My word, squire, there never was magic or witchcraft like the steam and metal witchcraft of a Yorkshire mill."

"Well, well, Steve. I don't fret myself, because I am set in stiller ways, and I don't blame those who like the hurrying of steam and metal. Each of us has God's will to do, and our own race to run; and may we prosper."

After this, Steve, sometimes gaining and sometimes losing, gradually won his way back to the squire's liking. Stephen went in and out of the pleasant "Seat" dayshine and dark, as the acknowledged lover of Charlotte Sandal.