

Lord Buntingford's visit had been arranged two or three days before; and Mrs. Friend wished it well over. He was of course coming to talk about plans with his ward, who had now wasted the greater part of the London season in this primitive corner of Wales. And both he and Geoffrey were leaving historic scenes behind them in order to spend these few hours with Helena. For this was Peace Day, when the victorious generals and troops of the Empire, and the Empire's allies, were to salute England's king amid the multitudes of London, in solemn and visible proof that the long nightmare of the war had found its end. Buntingford had naturally no heart for pageants; but Helena had been astonished by Geoffrey's telegram, which had arrived the night before from the Lancashire town he represented in Parliament. As an M. P. he ought surely to have been playing his part in the great show. Moreover, she had not expected him so soon, and she had done nothing to hurry his coming. His telegram had brought a great flush of colour into her face. But she made no other sign.

"Oh, well, we can take them out to see bonfires!" she had said, putting on her most careless air, and had then dismissed the subject. For that night the hills of the north were to run their fiery message through the land, blazoning a greater victory than