

with an income not large enough to render work unnecessary, fill it with the daily food required by the nineteenth-century intellect, place in it the people you love best—but no! I won't go on. Could I conjure up such a lot as that, I should never want to go to heaven!

Fancy such a house on a dark winter's evening: bright, light, and warm, filled with the sound of wit and laughter, the voice of music, the deeper tones of argument; or, if such things are not forthcoming (and with continuity even their glory would depart), why, "*Let's go to the theatre!*"

A blessing upon blissful ignorance! If every one knew and felt these things as we do, who would live in the country? And it's quite impossible that we can all live in town. I begin to wish I had not said any thing about it.

Poor Irene felt it terribly when she first went down to Cocklebury. Imagine turning out of a place like Fen Court, where she had been enjoying an income of several thousands, to begin life anew on a hundred pounds a year, in two meagre little rooms in an ill-built cottage in the country! She had no heart left, poor girl, with which to bear it bravely, and she felt as downcast and humiliated as though she were really guilty of what she had been accused. Master Tommy, too, did not tend to lighten her burden at this particular moment. Children, as a rule, do not take kindly to any violent changes; and this young gentleman's character had developed in a marvelous way of late. He had no recollection left now of his mother nor the poverty in which he had been reared; but quite thought—if ever he thought at all—that he was Irene's child, and the luxuries of Fen Court had always been his own. He liked to sleep in his mamma's bed, and was proud that she should wash and dress him instead of Phoebe; but he grumbled dreadfully at the loss of his pleasures, and the inconveniences he was forced to undergo. "I don't like that ugly basin!" he would say, the first thing in the morning. "I won't be washed in it, mamma! It is like a servant's basin. I want the pretty one I used to have with the little roses on it. And why can't I have jam for breakfast now? Where is the jam we had at Priestley? why couldn't you bring it away with us, mamma? I don't like this new place. There is no garden here to run in, and no carriage, and the woman has no donkey—and when I asked her why she had no donkey, she said, if I wanted all those things, why did I come to Cocklebury?"

"O Tommy! you mustn't talk like that. What did you say to her?"

"I told her not to speak to me that I'm a gentleman and the master of the fox-hounds, and I shall go back to the Court and get my donkey. Let us go back to-day, mamma! I don't like this nasty place; there are only cabbages in the garden."

"My darling!" said Irene, as she took the child upon her lap, "you wouldn't like to go away from your mamma—would you?"

"No! You must come, too."

"I can't go, Tommy. I am never going back to the Court again, and my little boy must try to be happy here."

"Don't cry, mamma! I will be happy. I will get the little broom and sweep up all the crumbs. I like doing that much better than the donkey. And I will get your boots, and put them inside the fender, and then they will be warm when you go out walking. And I—I—" continued the child, looking all round the room to see what he could do, "and I will do lots of things, mamma, if you don't cry." And then he would bring his mite of a pocket-handkerchief, and scrub her eyes until he had made her laugh in spite of herself, and think, while this affection was spared to her, she could never be entirely unhappy. But a hundred pounds a year is *very, very* little on which to keep two people—it is hardly enough to feed them. With clothing they were, of course, amply stocked; but Irene (who was any thing but ignorant of the value of money) found it hard enough to provide herself and the child with the common necessities of life, even in such an out-of-the-way place as Cocklebury.

It was a wonderful little village, dedicated, apparently, to the nurture of old maids—who, one and all, called upon Mrs. Mordaunt and offered their assistance to her; but, though she was no ungracious, she declined all advances. She was not going to have it said afterward by these virtuous maidens that she came among them upon false pretenses; and if they had but known, etc. etc.

She could imagine, if any rumors of her unfortunate story reached their ears, how they would turn up their virginal noses at her and poor little Tommy, and declare they had suspected it from the very first. So she kept to herself those miserable little lodgings, and made them all the duller and less pleasant for the fact. She was devoted to the child—to his baby-lessons and baby-pleasures, and waited on him like a faithful nurse from morning until night. She knew that it could not be long now before Lord Muiraven returned to England; and then, if she