

"But you cannot pretend to mourn for him? Of course it was dreadfully sudden. Still——"

"Ah, he wor a good 'usbin nows and thens, he wor, when the drink werent in him," she interrupted. "I wishes he wor back along o' me, I do!"

Mary glanced rather helplessly at Stella. She was well accustomed to such scenes, and to administering whatever comfort might seem appropriate. But this indeed seemed an occasion when consolation could scarcely be genuinely needed.

"Now come, Mrs. Candey," she exclaimed at last, "just think. When did he ever say one kind word to you?"

There was very obvious hesitation for reflection. Then the dawn of a smile crossed the wan countenance, as an evidently pleasant recollection recurred to the widow's memory.

"I mind," she said, "I mind it well. It wor a Saturday neet, and oos wor marketing. He wor in front and I coomed ahint. And he lewked round for me, he did, and shouted, 'Coom along, owd draggletail.' Ah! he wor good when he hadn't had too mooch, he wor."

"Well, that was really comic, in spite of her tears," remarked Miss Brookes, as soon as the cottage door was closed behind them. "I shall have a little history of my own to tell now, and it caps all Guy's tales, 'Coom along, owd draggletail.'" And her light-hearted laughter rang out upon the night air. But Mary sighed.

"It was so pathetic," she said. "I feel downright ashamed of myself, Stella. To think that I should have lived all these years, and never have discovered, until now, what a woman's love can endure and yet survive. Poor Mrs. Candey!"

"I'll give you half-a-crown to take to her," returned Stella repentantly. But considering the fact that next day, which was Sunday, her sister found Harry and Wynne listening, with fits of laughter, to the tale, it may be feared that even yet she scarcely saw the incident in its more serious aspects. The trio were still indulging in their mirth when Mary started upon the way to her Bible Class.

Composed, as this was, of lads exactly of the same stamp as the members of the night-school—many young men indeed attending both—the Sunday afternoon gathering was far the less numerous. And probably for this reason. There is in the Yorkshireman a keen love of learning, which leads him ever to desire

more than he has already attained, a love which even compulsory education cannot entirely destroy. Precisely for this reason is it that technical schools flourish in the "north countree." No less was it due to this cause that twice each week lads, who had already partially forgotten the simple elements of learning which once had been theirs, used to assemble with eagerness to avail themselves of Mrs. Jaxon's instructions. Whether or not the Education Acts will ever, in that part of the world, entirely do away with all need for the subsequent secular teaching of those who have passed through the School Board standards, certain it is that that time had not arrived ten years ago, when, in Thetfield, Tom Beresford was lying in the infirmary, and Guy Ryder, miles away, was giving battle to Caryl Clive. Almost as certain is it that the period has not arrived to-day.

But in the matter of purely religious study the same facts cannot be as broadly stated, though, indeed, the elder classes of Lancashire and Yorkshire Sunday Schools, which young men and women continue to attend often after marriage, evidence that though the wish for such training be less marked it is by no means entirely undeveloped.

The particular day in question was cold and cheerless, altogether a contrast to that which had preceded it. The school-keeper had lighted a fire in the great stove, in the middle of the room, and clustering round it for the warmth, with every tongue busy, Mary found the young men.

"Ah! I'm glad it will be comfortable! Foke the coal, please, Stacey. Shirt, and you, Riley, bring the forms this way. We may just as well sit here, you know."

There was no one else to disturb, for the class was held in a separate room away from all others. And Mary was perfectly aware that, labouring as they did all the days of the week in the most intense heat, these lads felt the least touch of cold as a misery. It was well for their teacher, often, that she herself did not object to glowing embers and scorching flames.

"I am not going to take the next lesson in the course," she said, when the hymn had been sung and supplemented, at Furniss' request, by a second. "I've been thinking so much since Thursday of something you told me, Stacey. I think we'll talk about that, and read a chapter that I have chosen afterwards. Shall we?"