

not forgotten previous encounters. "Won't offer to shake hands. 'Cos why?" He showed the backs of his own, which were lacerated and bleeding. "Caterpillars," added Mr Middlecoat in explanation.

"There now!" cried Mrs Bosenna in accents of genuine dismay. "I'd no idea you were tearin' yourself like that—and so easy to ask Dinah to fetch out a pair o' gloves!"

"Do you mean to say, sir," asked Cai in his simplicity, "that caterpillars bite?"

"No, I don't," answered Mr Middlecoat. "But you can't get at 'em and avoid these pesky thorns."

Said Mrs Bosenna gaily,—“Mr Middlecoat called on me half an hour ago wi' the purpose to make himself disagreeable as usual—though I forget what his excuse was, this time—and I set him to hunt caterpillars.”

"Dang it, look at my hands!" growled the young farmer, holding them out.

"And last month, wi' that spell of east wind, 'twas the green-fly. But I reckon we've mastered the pests by this time. Didn't find many caterpillars, eh?"

"No, I didn'," answered Mr Middlecoat, still sulkily. "But them as I did you bet I scrunched."

"Well, they deserved it, for the last few be the dangerousesest. They give over the leaves to eat the buds. But 'tis labour well spent on 'em, and we'll have baskets on baskets now, by Jubilee Day."

"'Tis the Queen's flower—the royal flower—sure enough," said Cai, looking about him in admiration. He had not visited the new garden for some weeks, and on the last visit it had been but an unpromising patch stuck about with stiff, thorny twigs, all leafless, the most of them projecting but a few inches above the