

He had come into a situation where sinews and inches were of no avail.

"Your honour—your reverence—" he said, with a choking voice, and then stopped, for the Rev. John Burslam in a few words offered himself as the prisoner's bondsman and was accepted.

There was a double tie between the men. Sam had no great choice of words outside those pertaining to his work and sports; but his great dumb heart had received several new impressions, and feeling, sooner or later, breaks forth into speech. The preacher was not at all hurt at Sam's silence. He knew that his gratitude was struggling with a galling sense of humiliation and obligation.

But, for all this, he did not waste his opportunity. Never had Sam Naylor heard such downright truths. All the accomplishments on which he prided himself John Burslam proved to be utterly brutal and contemptible. Sam looked stealthily at his brawny arms and felt ashamed for them. Bully's big jaws and mighty grip lost value in his eyes. His great drowsy soul was awakening, but awakening in the midst of opposing feelings—a tempest in which all was darkness as well as tumult.

As they neared the preacher's house the door opened, and little Mary stood on the steps to welcome them. "O, Mr. Naylor, I am so glad all is right!" she said, and offered him her hand. The August sunshine fell all over the white-robed girl; she seemed like an angel to Sam. He looked steadfastly at her a moment, and then threw his hands behind him. "Nay, nay," he stammered; "I'm none fit to touch thee, lass."

He turned suddenly up the street, and John let him go without protest. Silence was "the word in season" in this case. Sam's first thought was the ale-house, for he craved beer imperatively. But he also craved solitude and quiet, and for once he dreaded the thought of the big arm-chair, and the crowd of men with their tipsy jokes and songs.

While he hesitated he saw Mary Burslam standing between him and the open door of temptation. She stood in the bright sunshine, and her dress was whiter than its light, and her sweet serious face looked steadfastly at him. "An hallucination?" Of course, it would have been an hallucination to me, or to any of my readers; but to Sam Naylor, no—it was real as life and death to him.

"I'll niver goa inside t' door again; see if I do!" And with this promise Sam turned to his own house.

It was even more uncomfortable than usual. Martha had good cause for weeping, and she was indulging it. Not even Sam's