

"It must be costing him a deal of money, all this here feasting and merry-making," said one guest.

"It'll be nothing to him," remarked another. "No more to him than the price of a pint of ale to you and me."

"They do say," said a third, "that he carries thousands of pounds about him wherever he goes."

"And that's true," said another guest, sinking his voice to a whisper. "The landlord yonder told me yesterday that he had to go up to Mr. Rutherford's bedroom one day when he was out, and there on the dressing-table he found a packet of Bank of England notes—just lying about like. Eleven thousand pounds there were! The landlord locked 'em up, and gave 'em to him when he came in, and said 'he didn't ought to leave money lying about."

"I'm among honest folk," says James, and didn't seem to care. And the gold that he carries, it 'ud buy a farm!"

"Well, it's fair amazing," said another. "I wish I had his money or half of it. But here he comes—sh!"

Mr. Rutherford, faultlessly attired in evening dress, and wearing a single magnificent diamond in his shirt front, did the honors of the evening with great ease, cordiality and evident pleasure. Never had such a repast been served in the history of the village. There were dishes which the simple Slowford people had never heard of, and wines which they would never taste again. There were delicacies hard to procure, and liquors and coffee that made most of them wonder if they were dreaming. There were speeches by Mr. Rutherford who spoke very modestly and feelingly; and by the vicar, who voiced the pride of the village in this, its distinguished son, and by the oldest man present who said that he'd seen a many amazing things in his day, but this was the amazingest of them all. Then came a visit to the coach-house where there were more speeches, and some songs, and singing of "For he's a jolly good fellow" from the assembled company, and then James and his guests returned to the great room, where cigars of the best brands and spirits and similar creature comforts were laid

out, and settled themselves for an evening's conviviality. The conviviality chiefly consisted, however, in listening to James. He took good care to see that every man's glass was constantly replenished that a fresh cigar was always at his hand and that everybody was comfortable. And he talked—talked well and easily not in any braggart fashion but in modest, assured tones, after the fashion of a man who knows that he has proved himself. He told them of his adventure, of his work, of the coming of success, of the building up of a great business; and, at the request of the parson, he entered into a learned, but simply-worded disquisition on the prospects of diamond-mining in South Africa, and displayed such marvellous knowledge of it in its scientific and financial aspects that his audience broke up in amazement at his ability and cleverness.

"A remarkably shrewd and able man," said the parson as he shook hands at the vicarage gate with his churchwarden and two or three of his principal parishioners who had walked through the village with him.

"A very able man—a Napoleon of finance!"

"He seems to know what he's talking about" said the miller.

"It seems a better paying business than farming," said a farmer.

"Payin'!" exclaimed the vicar. "My dear friend there is no doubt that a new Eldorado is being opened up in South Africa. If I were—er, a man of means, and wished to become wealthy, I would stake every penny I could lay hands on in mining investments. The returns are simple enormous, as we may learn from the case of our worthy friend and host this evening."

And the rest of them secretly agreed, and went home contrasting their own hard and toiling lives with that of a man who appeared to be able to coin money at his ease, and the old spirit of contrariness began to work.

Next day Mr. James Rutherford had many callers. Each caller had the same story to tell. He had saved money, and money had come to him from his forbears.