

The Village Blacksmith.

o' this parish. Now, I'm sure he could get Geordie taken in as an apprentice. Besides, though my brother's no a bachelor like myself, he 'as no family; but he and his wife are just remarkably fond o' young folks, and I know they would look after the laddie, and see that he doesn't get into harm's way."

This warm sympathy of minister and schoolmaster began to pour its kindly influence over the sturdy smith. The fatherly heart in him was too deeply moved to let him speak without showing his emotion, and his undemonstrative Scotch nature made him shrink from such an exposure. But it did him good to talk, and to hear others talk, of a matter on which it had been a dread for him to think. It was no longer a dim horror, with which he dared not grapple, brooding over his spirit in the oppressive darkness of a fearful silence. He had grappled with it, and flung it out into the clear light of practical thought. He was like a man for whom the phantoms of a nightmare are vanishing before the realities of a cheerful dawn.

After a brief pause the minister continued—"But I think you had better come in wi' Mr. Hamilton and me, and we'll get time to talk the whole plan over."

"But, sir," objected the smith, "I thocht ye had