

## THE SQUIRE OF SANDAL-SIDE.

BY AMELIA E. BARR.

## CHAPTER VIII.—THE ENEMY IN THE HOUSEHOLD.

AFTER the wedding, there were some weeks of that peaceful monotony which is the happiest vehicle for daily life,—weeks so uniform that Charlotte remembered their events as little as she did their particular weather. The only circumstance that cast any shadow over them related to Harry. His behaviour had been somewhat remarkable, and the hope that time would explain it had not been realized at the end of August.

About three weeks before Sophia's marriage, Harry suddenly wrote to say that he had obtained a three months' furlough, in order to go to Italy with a sick friend. This letter, so utterly unexpected, caused some heart-burning and disappointment. Sophia had calculated upon Harry's fine appearance and splendid uniform as a distinct addition to her wedding spectacle. She also felt that the whole neighbourhood would be speculating upon the cause of his absence, and very likely infer from it that he disapproved of Julius; and the bare suspicion of such a slight made her indignant.

Julius considered this to be the true state of the case, though he promised himself "to find out all about Mr. Harry's affairs" as soon as he had the leisure and opportunity.

"The idea of Harry going as sick-nurse with any friend or comrade is absurd, Sophia. However, we can easily take Florence into our wedding-trip, only we must not let Charlotte know of our intention. Charlotte is against us, Sophia; and you may depend upon it, Harry meant to insult us by his absence."

Insult or not to the bride and bridegroom, it was a great disappointment to Mrs. Sandal. To see, to speak to Harry was always a sure delight to her. The squire loved and yet feared his visits. Harry always needed money; and lately his father had begun to understand, and for the first time in his life, what a many-sided need it was. To go to his secretary, and to find no gold pieces in its cash-drawer; and to his bank-book, and find no surplus credit there, gave the squire a feeling of blank amazement and heart-sick perplexity. He felt that such a change as that might prefigure other changes still more painful and frightsome.

Charlotte inclined to the same opinion as Julius, regarding her brother's sudden flight to Florence. She concluded that he had felt it impossible to congratulate his sister, or to simulate any fraternal regard for Julius; and her knowledge of facts made her read for "sick friend" "fair friend." It was, indeed, very likely that the beautiful girl, whose likeness Harry carried so near his heart, had gone to Florence; and that he had moved heaven and earth to follow her there.

So, at intervals, they wondered a little about Harry's peculiar