

So close to London, she might renew acquaintanceship with all her old friends; and then the Crystal Palace, such an advantage! But the prospect of vicinity to flower-shows and cat-shows, concerts, pantomimes, and conjurers, seemed to hold out no charms to our poor heroine. She remained, as her aunt herself expressed it, "as obstinate as a pig," and put in her final claim to the character by going up to town one day with her child and her luggage, and thence writing to inform Mrs. Cavendish that she had fixed on, and was about to proceed to, a distant place, where she hoped and intended to remain *perdu*, and free from the innovations of all well-meaning friends until she should have somewhat recovered from the sudden shock of her late bereavement. But she did not refuse to communicate with her relations, and many letters on the subject passed between them through the mediumship of Mr. Walmsley.

It was strange how Cocklebury happened to become Irene's destination. She had thought of Winchester—indeed, she had gone down to Winchester, hearing it to be a dull, behind-the-world sort of old place, but had found the town fuller and more accessible than she anticipated, and passed on to a little village beyond. There she had experienced much difficulty in finding lodgings, and a certain landlady, in accounting for the rent of her apartments, mentioned that they were in great demand. "For only yesterday, mum, a lady, as might be yourself, came over from Cocklebury, which is a good twenty-seven mile to the left of this, all in a flutter for rooms, and would have took these directly, only two wasn't enough for her."

Cocklebury! the name seemed familiar to her; where had she heard it before? She could not tell, and yet it reverberated on her heart as though it held a place there. Doubtless she had heard it in some desultory conversation with Lord Muiraven, but the remembrance had died away. Only from that cursory mention of the fishing-village grew out her final settlement there. She returned to Winchester, and began to make inquiries concerning Cocklebury, and, going to look at the desolate, retired little hole, found two tiny rooms to suit a quarterly balance of five-and-twenty pounds, and engaged them.

It was a dull, lowering autumn day when the young widow removed her boxes and her little boy to their new home. Who is it thinks the country charming all the year round? Many say so, but they belong chiefly to the unfortunate class whose health, business, or profit, renders

such a residence compulsory to them; and it is just as well to make the best of an incurable ill. But for those who are not thus compelled to dwell there! No one denies its advantages in fine weather, and no one can appreciate them like the man whose life is spent generally in the close atmosphere of town. There are moments when brain and body have been overworked, and speculations have failed, and the atmosphere reminds one of that fabulous pandemonium where we should like to consign all who have disappointed us; when the thought only of cool green fields, and waving boughs, and murmuring brooks, is enough to make us forswear brick walls, gas, hurry, dust, and lies, forever: but does it last? We rush to the green fields; we lounge beneath the waving boughs; we are deliciously lazy and useless, and altogether demoralized for a few days of complete inaction; and then the brain springs up again, the mind wants food, the fields pall, the trees pall, the waters pall; we demand men and women, and conversation: we are again sharpening the mental scythe with which we mow down our adversaries; and if it is beyond our power, or our principles, to rush back again pell-mell into the arena of business and of work, we begin to hate the monotony we are unaccustomed to! But what of the country—that paradise of city-men—in autumn and in winter; what of the leafless boughs, the filthy, muddy lanes, the barren gardens, the evenings spent, night after night, at home, with your next-door neighbor five miles away, and no resource but to read the papers till you go to sleep? A country-house always feels cold and damp in winter. If it is a large one, it has long corridors full of draughts; and if it is small, it possesses horrid glass doors which open to the garden, through which one sees a panorama of sodden leaves that makes one shudder to look at. People in the country, too, get in the habit of leaving all the doors open in summer, and do not get out of it as completely as they should do in the severer season. Generally speaking, also, their chimneys smoke, and their passages are not half lighted or warmed: and, altogether, give me a house in town. A cozy house at the West End—not too large, for size implies grandeur, and grandeur entails care; but, well carpeted, well curtained, and sufficiently mental, not to render it incommodious—a house where privacy and publicity are alike attainable—where each and every one is free to come or to go—where the only rules are one's own inclinations, and the only rest a change of occupation.

Light it well, warm it thoroughly, maintain it