

began to wile away my time by poking about the town, visiting its few sights and antiquities, and finally determined to inspect some of its famous manufactories.

"Our wedding was fixed for Michaelmas Day, it being a whim of Emma's to be married at the same date as her parents had been; and though this fell on Monday, to my mind the most uncomfortable day for any festivity, she would not relinquish the idea, and I had of course to concede, it being, after all, a whim on both sides—hers to be married on the same day as her parents had been, mine to dislike Monday.

"On the Saturday before our marriage I went to the largest manufacturer in Steepleton, Mr. Furton by name, and requested him to allow me to inspect his mill

"'With the greatest pleasure in the world, Mr. Cliffe,' he said, 'but you have chosen a bad day for the purpose. My workmen leave early on Saturday. However, as it is too late now for you to take another chance, you are welcome to see what you can of the place.'

"Therewith he proceeded to show me all over the spacious building, with its piles and bales of goods ready packed to be sent away to different parts of the world, the room in which the process of packing was carried on, and the innumerable number of apartments, in which goods were seen in every stage of manipulation, from the raw material to the ready-finished article.

"The noise of the machinery was deafening, the air warm and unpleasant; but by and by, as we entered the last few rooms in which work was yet carried on, the din grew fainter, the wheels moved round less swiftly, and my cicerone told me that in about half an hour all the steam would be spent, and the machines not set in motion again till early the following Monday.

"'Except Sundays, the manufactory is at work both night and day,' he explained, 'changing hands for night and day labor, as it would be too great an expense to allow the steam to be wasted all night; and to extinguish the fire would not answer either, as the right temperature could not be attained quickly enough next day. As it is, the fire is lighted again in the middle of Sunday night for the next week's work.'

"You can imagine I was highly interested in all I saw, and so were my companions; for, just as we were starting on our tour of inspection, two ladies had joined us—a daughter and a friend of Mr. Furton—who had called in to fetch him home, and requested to be allowed to accompany us, as the friend, who was a Londoner, like myself, and only staying at Steepleton for a short time, desired also to see the interior of that grim, square, many-windowed block, that looked so drear and uncanny all day and was so brilliantly illuminated at night.

"We then left the building, from which the work-people were just streaming out, both men and women. The former were fine, muscular fellows, many of the latter of surprising beauty; they were laughing and talking loudly, their mirth was boisterous, and their style of behaviour such as I have observed, is most prevalent in towns solely given up to manufacture, and where the so-called 'hands' form the greater portion of the population.

"As I have said, we had just left the building when Miss Furton discovered that she must have lost a small parcel in one of the rooms, and requested me in the sweetest of tones, to turn back and get it for her. I never could refuse a lady's petition, as you know; so I immediately promised to comply, though Mr. Furton desired to save me the trouble, which, naturally, I would not hear of, as he had already wasted so much of his leisure time on me.

"Thanking him for his kindness in showing me over the factory, I bade him and the young ladies, 'Good-bye,' as I did not wish them to wait for me, knowing that to look for a small parcel over that vast area of space was neither an easy nor rapid task, and I promised either to bring it myself, when found, if I had time before dinner, or else to send it round to them in the course of the evening.

"I re-entered the building and searched the ground floor unsuccessfully; then determining to act upon the principle that when we look for a thing it is