

book himself some day, for he's as dry as parch-ment, and has ne'er a word to give of his own accord, though they do say he's chock full o' learning. But he's a kind gentleman, and the poor have no more to greet about now than they had in the time of her ladyship's father, Mr. Dighton."

"Oh, then the property came through her?"

"Ay. His lordship hadn't much but his title and his books, they say."

"Surely she might have found a better mate than an old Scotch bookworm!"

"Well, she was a bit of a madcap, as a lass, and they say old Mr. Dighton was glad to get her off his hands, and married to a honest man. And she don't fret for him and his books: she has too much life in her for that," the old man added with evident admiration.

The young doctor was rather surprised at the wide latitude which this old peasant, who by all precedent should have been a rigid censor of the manners and morals of his juniors and superiors, allowed to a lady whose conduct seemed, by his own showing, to be open to severe criticism. He was about to put a question to the old man with the view of getting an explanation of this singular indulgence, when certain faint sounds, which seemed to come from some distance behind them, broke upon his ears, and caused him again to start, as he had done at sight of the light on the road in front of them.

"You've no such strong nerves for a doctor, sir," said his companion jocularly. "You started at sight o' t' light in John Barlow's cottage yonder, and now at t' sound o'—why of her ladyship's sleigh-bells," he ended, after listening a moment to the rapidly approaching sounds.

"I dare say you don't believe me, but I don't remember such a thing ever to have happened to me before; and I can swear I never before made