

band would add to your kindness by staying on here for a few days with the boys? You would see the country round, and then you would motor down with them and join us at Mintern Abbas for another week. D'you think you can spare the time? Jean would like you to see her in her own house, and I needn't say how honoured I would feel."

"Bless me," said Mrs. Macdonald. "That would mean a whole fortnight away from Priorsford. You could arrange about the preaching, John, but what about the spring cleaning? Agnes is a good creature, but I'm never sure that she scrubs behind the shutters; they're the old-fashioned kind, and need a lot of cleaning. However," with a deep sigh, "it's very kind of you to ask us, and at our age we won't have many more opportunities of having a holiday together, so perhaps we should seize this one. Dear me, Jean, I don't understand how you can look so bright so near your wedding. I cried and cried at mine. Have you not a qualm?"

Jean shook her head and laughed, and Mr. Macdonald said:

"Off with you all to your play. It's an odd thing to choose to go to to-night—

" 'For never was there such a tale of woe
As this of Juliet and her Romeo.' "

Mrs. Macdonald shook her head and sighed.

"I can't help thinking it's a poor preparation for a serious thing like marriage. I often don't feel so depressed at a funeral. There at least you know you've come to the end—nothing more can happen." Then her eyes twinkled and they left her laughing.