

and torn asunder by the rack of disquiet, and now Peace, the gentle healer, came to pull them back into their places again.

Of all the moments of his life-time these were the most impressionable. Subdued in mind and body, he was plastic in all things, and as the hand of heaven willed it, he fell into the guidance of good people. The Loders were his salvation; under the influence of their companionship his mind soared from the filthy, muddy slough into which it had sunk, and the honest grain of manly thoughts displaced the rank weeds of his nature.

A year elapsed, and who would know Harold? Who would recognize in the genial, high-minded young man the sickly, broken-down rake of Duke Street? It is true that every now and then an ashy whiteness of despair comes like a ghost to overcloud his features; but even the recurrence of his momentary sadness becomes less and less frequent.

Encouraged by the curate and urged by his father, possessing, too, all the advantages of opportunity, no wonder that his heart, now more purified, yielded to the seductive influence of his former love. He had to worship his idol in secret, however, for he dared not breathe one word of the depth of his affection. All the gossip in the village were astonished as time flew by that Miss Loder remained a spinster; but it was universally agreed upon that Harold was engaged to her, and that they must be married eventually.

At last a report was prevalent in the village that old Macfarlane was ill, and this was speedily followed by the news of his death. A wet season had brought bad crops; the miser had taken one of his largest farms from the hands of his tenant, thinking to make more of his acres, when the deluge came, and crop after crop was mildewed and spoiled. The loss was too much for him, and hurried him to his grave.

Thus Andrew died and Harold ruled in his stead.

In a brief time a great change came over the hall: young and cheerful servants glided about the house, the gardens assumed an air of neatness, and Mrs. Bland retired on a pension to adorn a modest cottage at the back of the rectory.

The whole village felt the change. There was more work to be done, more money spent, more given away, and the young squire was the most popular man in the county.

In the library before the fire sat Harold one dark November afternoon shortly after his accession. He was in one of his fits—as the domestics termed his periods of despondency. At his feet lay a noble Labrador dog, between whose paws nestled a tiny black-and-tan terrier. He was deep in his reflections of the past; vision after vision floated across his imagination; when suddenly he was startled from his reverie by a servant entering the room and presenting him with a card. It was a dirty little bit of paste-board, and yet as Harold read its superscription, his countenance became livid, and an involuntary “Heavens!” burst from his lips.

“What did you say, Sir?” said the surprised domestic.

“Tell him—tell him—I—I will see him, and send him here.” Then he looked once more at the card and read, “LEWIS ABRAHAM, Outfitter, Clothier, and General Dealer, 6, Scragg’s Court, Houndsditch. N. B. Gentlemen’s wardrobes bought for cash.”