

in the future. The state of her health soon began to be sufficient excuse for her absence.

We imprison those who rob a person of his purse, but no punishment is meted out to those who rob him of that which is far more valuable, his good name. Indeed, the reputation thieves themselves were the first to perform the part of the Levite, and with a contemptuous shrug of the shoulder "pass by on the other side."

But the reader must not suppose that all the good people of Ortgeard were uncharitable. Among the few friends that remained to the unfortunate victim of slander, man's perfidy, woman's unscrupulousness, and British Columbia Law were Miss Todd and Mr. Hastings, the innocent cause of the worst of the trouble.

The latter, as soon as ' heard of the loss of property and husband (perhaps in his opinion the first loss was greater than the second), called to see if he could render any assistance. Before doing so, however, having obtained the name of the purchaser of the Pierce property, he bought the place at a much higher figure than that for which it had been sold. Why did he do this? His reasons for doing so will be discovered later.

"You promised, Mrs. Pierce, to let me know if you were in need of any financial assistance, but you have not done so. I don't think you have treated me as a friend. What do you intend doing? Will you not tell me?"

Nobody who heard the cold business-like tone of the speaker would have suspected the volcano below the surface.