

JOHN HARKER'S BOND.

BY E. A. CAMPBELL,

Author of "A Good Position," "Nellie's Firstfruits," "Miss Priss," etc.

CHAPTER VII.

"THE LOVE OF GOD."



WHILE Ruth and Stella, engaged in affectionate and confidential chat, were climbing the hill towards the Old Hall, Timmy Brodie, washed and shining as regards head and hands, and with as much superfluous soot as possible shaken from his clothes, was seated in dignified state in the Vicar's study. In spite of the comfortable chair in which the Vicar had placed him, it could scarcely be said that Timmy felt at his ease. The unwonted surroundings took from him much of the effrontery with which Nature, and his mode of

life, had liberally endowed him. A little tray stood on the corner of the writing table, bearing a teapot and two cups, and at the moment Mr. Denman was adding to Timmy's confusion by pouring out a cup of tea for him. "Sugar, Brodie?" he demanded, holding the sugar-tongs in his hand; "or perhaps you prefer to help yourself?" "No, sir, thank you, sir; I'd rayther not; whatever you please to give me, sir;" and Timmy backed away from the proffered sugar bowl in alarm.

"Then I'll treat you as I do myself, two pieces to the cup, and I hope you will like it."

The refreshing cup having been emptied and replenished, Timmy waxed bolder. "I'd like to know your opinion on things in general, sir," said Timmy anxiously. "You see, this is how 'tis: if folks is to run in double harness, 'tis all the same as 'osses. They must pull together; and if I don't 'zactly know how you're going to pull, and which way you're going to pull, why, I'm a bit in the dark, don't you see?"

"I'm afraid if you want to know my opinion of things in general, Brodie, we shall have to sit here for a longer time than either you or I have to spare; but I quite agree with you in your simile about the horses. 'Can two walk together except they be agreed?' asked the old prophet; and the question is as pertinent now as it was all those years ago. You came forward last night and offered me your assistance, and now I am glad to find that you wish to know the opinions of the man whom you have offered to help. But there is one thing that I must say about this running double. When horses are in harness, they are, as a rule, being driven; they have to trust to the guidance of the coachman. Now, who is to be our coachman, Brodie? There must be the guiding will, and hand, and we must obey it. Who is to be the coachman?"

Brodie pondered. "Well, sir, I can't 'zactly answer that question; 'tis a bit of a poser. P'raps we shall each drive ourselves; we've each got our own idees, I take it, to guide us by."

"That won't do, Brodie; our own ideas may not run on the same lines,