

come was all over, it comforted the Squire to think that it had been so.

It was during these three days that Georgie told her father that she thought Juliet Blair was beginning to regret having sent Cis away.

"No! do you really think so?" he said, quite eagerly; for this was a scheme very near to his heart.

"I do indeed, papa; for I never saw anyone so altered as Juliet is—she looks so ill and out of spirits; and the other day when I was lunching with her, she hardly spoke, and ate nothing. She is evidently very far from happy."

It was strange that Georgie never once connected the sudden departure of Colonel Fleming with Juliet's altered looks and spirits. But the Travers family had so long considered Cis as her lover that it did not readily occur to any of them that he might possibly have a rival.

"Well, that would be good news indeed," said the Squire. "Shall I write to him to come home?"

"Well, no—not yet. If she is coming round to him, it will be because she misses him; and his absence is doing him more good than his being here could do;—she asked after him, and seemed pleased to hear about him."

"I'm sure I'm glad to hear it. She's a nice girl; it would be a great comfort to me if Cis married her. She would improve him wonderfully; perhaps, too, she might make him keep on the hounds when I am gone—she could do it, if any one could," added the old man, with a half sigh.

"We won't think of that yet, papa dear," said Georgie, coming round behind him, and kissing the top of his bald head fondly as she used to do in old days. "I hope you will keep them yourself for many a long year."

The Squire pressed his daughter's hand for a minute, and then dropped it hurriedly, as if ashamed of his unwonted tenderness.

Like most male Britons past middle life, he was not prone to give way to emotion; the only exhibition of feeling he indulged in was that of anger. As for love and sympathy and religion and so forth, the Squire would have said that they formed a part, no doubt, of every Christian's nature; but he considered it unmanly, un-English, and almost indecorous to speak of such things,

or to give any outward signs of their existence.

So when his darling child, with a little effusion of repentant affection, made her little loving speech and kissed him, he just pressed her hand for an instant, and then hastened to change the subject to safer grounds.

"Ahem! yes, my dear," he coughed nervously; "that puppy is growing very leggy; that wasn't half such a good litter as the last that Jenny had—nothing like."

Georgie dragged up the puppy on to her lap by the scruff of his neck, with all his big weak-looking paws hanging feebly out in front of him, and a general depressed appearance, as if he expected shortly to be beaten, whilst his chances of beauty and usefulness were discussed.

And old Chanticleer, half-jealous, half-confiding, rested his grey nose and one heavy paw on his young mistress's knee, and blinked up lovingly at her with his one solemn brown eye.

Altogether it was an evening like old times that the two spent together in the dingy, cosy, little smoking-den.

The next morning the wind had gone round to the south-west, and the frost was giving in every direction.

"Hurrah!" shouted the Squire, as he bounced into the breakfast-room, with the energy of a schoolboy. "Hurrah! we shall hunt to-morrow if this goes on!"

"Hurrah!" echoed Flora, who always made a noise at the smallest pretext for doing so, jumping round the room, and clapping her hands, till her father started off and chased her round the table.

And what a commotion there was all day!—the grooms and the whips rushing into the house for orders; the Squire giving contradictory directions every hour according to the aspect of the sky; messages going up to the kennels, messages to the stables, and post-cards to be written to every member of the hunt in the county.

Georgie had her hands pretty full.

About five o'clock in the afternoon a steady rain came on, which satisfactorily settled the question of the departure of the frost.

"I have told Davis to bring the mare round for you in the morning," said the Squire to his daughter, coming in dripping wet from his last stable excursion, and taking off his shining macintosh in the hall—