

that might be worth studying. The cottage stood in a thoroughly rural garden, full of peas, beans, and cabbages, with a little plot round the house, gay with marrygolds, hollyhocks, and roses, and sweet with rosemary and lavender. The old dame's husband was a shrimper, or fisher for shrimps, whom I soon came to see regularly tracing the edge of the tide with his old white horse and net hung behind him. She had, besides me, it seemed, another lodger, who, she assured me, "was a very nice young man indeed, but, poor gentleman, he enjoyed but very indifferent health. Sometimes I think that he's been crossed in love, for I happened to cast my eye on one of his books—and there was a deal about love in it. It was all in poetry, you see, and so on; and then, again, I fancy he's consumptive, though I wouldn't like to say a word to him, lest it should cast him down, poor young man; but he reads too much, in my opinion, a great deal too much; he's never without a book in his hands when he's in doors; and that's not wholesome, you are sure, to be sitting so many hours in one posture, and with his eyes fixed in one place. But God knows best what's good for us all; and I often wonder whether he has a mother. I should be sorely uneasy on his account, if I was her." So the good dame ran on while she cooked me a mutton chop, and took an account of what tea and sugar and such things she must send for by the post-man, who was their daily carrier to the town. I listened to her talk, and looked at the pot of balm of Gilead, and the red and white balsams standing in the cottage window, and the large sleek and well-fed tabby cat sleeping on the cushion of the old man's chair, and was sure that I was in good hands, and grew fond of my quarters. Before the day was over, I became acquainted with the old shrimper, who came in after his journey to the next town with his shrimps, and was as picturesque an old fellow as you would wish to see, and full of character and anecdotes of the wrecks and sea incidents of that coast for forty years past. I had been informed all about who were the neighbours inhabiting the other cottages and farms, and had a good inkling of their different characters too; I had walked out to the bank when the

tide was up, and round the garden, and actually got into conversation with "the poor young man," my fellow lodger.

The next morning I was up early, and out to reconnoitre the place and neighbourhood; and this young man having found out that I was also addicted to the unwholesome practice of reading books, took at once a great fancy to me, and went with me as a guide and cicerone. I found that all the mystery about him was, that he was a youth articled to an attorney in great practice, and had stooped over the desk a little too much, but was soon likely to be as strong and sound as ever, being neither consumptive nor *crossed* in love, although in love he certainly was. A more simple-hearted, good-natured fellow it was impossible could exist. He had the most profound admiration of all poets and philosophers, and read Goldsmith, Shenstone, and Addison, with a relish that one would give a good deal for. As for Sir Walter Scott, and Lord Byron, and Tom Moore, he knew half of their voluminous poetical works by heart; mention any fine passage, and he immediately spouted you the whole of it; and as for the Waverly Novels, he had evidently devoured them entire, and was full of their wonders and characters. Yet, thus fond of poetry and romance, it was not the less true that he had a fancy for mathematics, and played on the fiddle and the flute into the bargain. Nor was this all the extent of his tastes: he had quite a *penchant* for natural history; had he time, he declared, he would study botany, ornithology, geology, and conchology too; and yet, although such a book-worm himself, he seemed to enjoy the company of the other visitors there who never read at all. There was a whole troop that he made acquaintance with, and whose characters he sketched to me, particularly those of a merry set who lodged at a cottage opposite, where he often went to amuse them with his fiddle. As my business was to see what were the characters and the amusements of such a place, I desired him to introduce me to them, but in the first place to let us run a little over the country.

The country was rich and flat, divided into great meadows full of luxuriant grass, grazed by herds of fine cattle, and surrounded by noble trees, which served to