

THE COTTAGE ON THE FELLS

CHAPTER I

"WELL," said Comyns, "I can't see for the life of me what makes you want to linger on in this benighted hole."

"There are a great many things in this world we can't see," replied Hellier.

They were standing on the pier at Boulogne, the Folkstone boat was just departing, the east wind was blowing, and over the cold, early spring day the clouds drifted, grey as the cygnet's feather.

Without wishing to paraphrase or parody a famous author, one may say that if one goes over to Boulogne and stands long enough on the pier, one will meet, most possibly, some one one knows—probably one's tailor.

Hellier had come over to Boulogne a fortnight ago to recruit from an attack of influenza; he was a briefless barrister, with two hundred and fifty pounds a year of his own; his chambers were in Clifford's Inn, and he had a taste for that side of life which lends itself to romantic literature.

The novels of Gaboriau, absorbed as a boy,