

smock-frock from shoulder to hem! Could the washing be included in the fourteen shillings? He pitchforked the second pile out of the cart.

"O—osier!" cried the boy, and the cart went on.

This time Alan fell on his hands and face. The front of the smock was now like the back, and the boy, who had a fine sense of humour, sat down on the ground for unre-served enjoyment of his laugh.

"Why the devil," cried the Squire, "can't you tell me when you are going on?"

"I did," said the boy, "I said 'O—osier.'"

Alan was silent, and resumed his work with greater care to preserve his balance at the word "O—osier."

Just then the Bailiff rode into the field.

"Well Squire," he said, "boys' work—eh?"

"Not quite."

"Had a fall in the muck? Better have taken off your frock and your waistcoat, too. Live and learn, sir. Don't you be too wasteful o' the muck. That stuff's precious. My missus, she says, if the Squire'll drop in when he's ready for a bite, she'll be honoured."

"I thank you, Bailiff. I am going to live as the men live."

"What ha' you got for your dinner, boy?"

"Bread and cheese."

"What has your daddy got?"

"Bread and cheese."

"You see, Squire, bread and cheese won't do for the likes of you. However, you have your own way. Have you got your dinner in your pocket, sir?"

"Why—no."

"Now, sir, do you think we can afford the time for the labourer to go all the way home and back again for dinner?"

That argument was irresistible, and Alan went to the Bailiff's house, where he was relieved of the unlucky smock.

Mrs. Bostock gave him some boiled pork and greens, with a glass of beer. That was at twelve o'clock: never had he been so hungry.

After dinner, he fed the pigs. Then he was set weeding, which the Bailiff thought a light and pleasant occupation for an October afternoon.

"I can hardly sit up," he wrote to Miranda that evening, "but I must tell you that I have done my first day's work. At

present I have had no opportunity of conversing with the men, but that will come in due course, no doubt. My only companion to-day has been a boy who laughed the whole time. Good-night, Miranda."

## CHAPTER XI.

"The mansion's self was vast and venerable:

With more of the monastic than has been

Preserved elsewhere: the cloisters still were stable,

The cells, too, and refectory, I ween."

IT is not to be understood that Alan was entirely satisfied with a lonely evening in a two-roomed cottage, or that he ceased altogether his visits at Dalmeny Hall. Occasionally, to be sure—but this was only at the beginning of his career as a peasant—he varied the monotony of the evening by inviting a brother farm-labourer to take supper with him. On these occasions the repast was of a substantial kind, accompanied by coffee, and followed by pipes. But it brought little joy, much less than might have been expected. The beefsteak was eaten with hunger, but in manifest dis-ease; there was no camaraderie as between fellow-workers in the same noble cause; the coffee was accepted as a poor substitute for the beer of the spotted Lion, and conversation flagged. Perhaps, Alan thought, there was some defect in his own mind which checked the sympathy necessary to bring out the full flavour of rustic society, and to enter into its inner soul. Else why should the talk be a series of questions on his part, and of answers on the other, like the Church Catechism? And why should his friend, departing at the earliest hour possible, manifest in his artless features a lively joy that he was now free to seek the shades of the Spotted Lion, and pour forth to friendly ears the complaint of a swain who found a supper too dearly bought at the cost of a night with the Squire.

Once, and only once, Alan ventured within the walls of the tavern. It was in the evening. A full parliament was assembled in the taproom. Every man had his pipe: every man his mug of beer: the windows were close shut: the fire was burning brightly: the petroleum lamp was turned on full: and what with the beer, the tobacco,