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enough money to retire, and proposed to take Mrs. Bradell for a year's tour on the Continent.

It meant, of course, parting with all the servants; it meant parting with Diamond, the most faithful of them all, Diamond, who had been parlormaid at "The Hollies" for twenty years, who was the most wonderfully devoted, reliable treasure that could be imagined. For these twenty years she had toiled every day, and all day,

of person; she spoke in a low, refined voice, and there was something charming and old-fashioned about her ways. She was tall and spare, with a rose face and blue Gloucestershire eyes, with just a slight squint. Now she was getting old, her hair was gray, her figure had begun to stoop. All the Bradells' felt that she must have an annuity, and she elected to go and live in a village in Cambridgeshire called Melkford, since it seemed that she could no longer serve any of the adored family in any capacity.

"You have worked hard," Mrs. Bradell said, patting her toil-worn hands. "You need a rest, Diamond."

"You shall have a cottage with apple-trees in the garden," said Master Humphrey, always Diamond's favourite among the children and now a handsome young barrister.

"But why do you choose Melkford, Diamond?" said Mr. Bradell.

"Please, sir, it's there that my only relation is living, my grandnephew. He's but a boy, and I thought I could make a home for him perhaps. His own mother, my dear niece Harriet, has been dead this six years."

"Will he come to live with you; is it arranged?" Mrs. Bradell had asked.

"Please, ma'am, he hasn't answered none of my letters, but he's only a

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BLACK, GREEN or MIXED

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on it, and they agreed that a small establishment for sweets and stationery would not entail very hard work. Master Humphrey having run down to Melkford himself on his motor bicycle to find out if a shop could be started and a cottage found.

And so it came to pass that on the very day that Mr. and Mrs. Bradell gave up the keys of "The Hollies," their daughter Kitty went down to Melkford with Diamond to settle her into a small cottage near the river which flowed through the village. With her Kitty carried her parting gift to Diamond, some sweets from Selfridge's to sell in the little shop. The rest of the stock had been ordered by Mr. Bradell, and sent down the previous day.

After a visit of twenty-four hours, during which she arranged the shop very prettily, Kitty Bradell fondly kissed Diamond, and the old woman watched her drive off in a hired trap to the station with tears in her eyes.

Unfortunately, though Diamond was a born servant, she was not, at first, a born shopkeeper. She became very depressed immediately Kitty had gone, and sold some good notepaper at an absurd price. She made inquiries about her grandnephew of the publican's wife, who came to purchase some of Kitty's reckless gift of sweets from Selfridge.

"Tom Hopper, my grandnephew, works at a farm near Melkford, I believe," she said. "Can you tell me the name of the farm?"

The woman gave a little scream of horror.

"Tom Hopper! That great, hulking lad! He's the worst behaved boy in Melkford. When all his people died, he went to live with Mrs. Tully down the lane, and got into bad habits; learned them from her boys, a lazy lot of young ruffians. Why, Tom Hopper was caught setting a rick on fire last year; he's a byword in Melkford!"

"Well, can I have his address?" said Diamond with great dignity. "I do not wish to hear what your estimation of his character may be."

She weighed out some sweets impatiently with her trembling old hand, and the woman stared at her.

"You'll find him up at the Burnside farm just now," said she. "He won't be there long; he's hired to

help the gardener at present, because they couldn't get anyone else. It's no good being kind to him, the Vicar's wife tried it."

Miss Diamond sent Tom a note that very night asking him to come and see her, and as she sat alone in the small unfamiliar cottage room, so different to the bright servants' hall in the house at Blackheath where she had reigned as queen, she felt horribly, terribly lonely. All that evening she wondered if there would not be a tap at the door from Tom. She even looked out the last picture she had of him as a chubby child of three from her old album, and wondered what he had grown into. He must be nearly fifteen now. Her loyal old heart refused to believe a word of what the publican's wife had told her. True, Tom had never acknowledged the Christmas and birthday presents she had faithfully sent him for years, but she knew that boys disliked writing. Master Humphrey could never be got to write in the old days.

(To be continued).

"Tommy," queried his father, "how do you stand in school these days?" "In the corner most of the time," replied truthful Tommy.

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for the beloved family she served, doing the most unnecessary things for the children, fetching and carrying for Mr. Bradell, nursing Mrs. Bradell in all her illnesses, the comfort and support of all in any domestic difficulty.

Diamond, who had come to the Bradells from the country where she had lived with her brother—a village schoolmaster—was a very refined type

boy," Diamond answered. "I must just find out when I arrive. But please, ma'am, I cannot be content to live on your bounty all the rest of my days. I should wish to get a living myself in some way. I had thought, perhaps, of a little shop."

The Bradells were not very anxious that their dear Diamond should be worried by a shop, but after a while they perceived that her mind was set

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