

deliberate act of oppression done upon that most defenceless of creatures—a widow—and that widow his own mother. Whatever there was of the "Village Hampden" in the breast of young Edward was now on fire, and he was from that day an enemy of the House of Hardnut. When there is enmity within us, alas! how frequently does the arch-fiend give us means and opportunities of indulging it!

It chanced a few evenings after widow Barton had received her notice, that as Edward was walking gloomily to the house he must soon leave, a rabbit struck across the path and made for the opposite cover. Its retreat, however, seemed barred, and with timid steps it ran first this way and then that, while Edward watched its movements. Moved by a sudden impulse—for respect for the game laws was strong within him—he forgot himself, raised a stone, took unerring aim, and the rabbit fell. He lifted it in his hand to see that it was but stunned, and nursed the pretty little creature until its life returned. Then taking it in his arms, he proceeded on his way. Scarcely had he started when he heard steps before him, and a moment afterwards the young Squire came into view, with his gun upon his shoulder. The situation was naturally recognized in a moment, and in a way boded ill for both.

"We have had many poachers here lately," said the young Squire to himself, "but little did we think they were of our own people. This must be stopped. Besides, this young upstart keeps the company of old Catchpole, and now I have a chance of putting him down."

"Here," said Edward to himself, "is the son of the man who has oppressed my mother, and who, in his turn, will oppress me. Came over with the Conqueror, did they? But, as Elijah says, the Conqueror was only a thief that succeeded, instead of being caught, as some less lucky thieves are. I hate the young stuck-up!"

The young Squire was the first to break the silence.

"Put down that rabbit."

"No, not for you nor anybody belongin' to you, if you tell me a thousand times, an' then shoot me with your fine gun at the end of it all," was the reply.

"Now," said the young Squire, "we used to play together, and I don't want to be too hard upon you. If the animal was dead, I might have thought you had picked it up, and I would have said nothing; but it is alive, which shows that you caught it of set purpose, and that you are a poacher. Put it down, and I will not tell my father."

"I care as little for your father as I do for you," was the response. "Your father is a robber of the widow, an' you will make a good second to 'im, for you want to rob the widow's son."

"There is no use in wasting words," answered the youth, "if you won't put it down I'll make you."

But in his wrath he was true to the instincts of an English gen-