

## OLD ROGER'S BIT OF PRIDE.

BY RUTH LAMB,

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## CHAPTER IX.

## CONFIDENCES.



MISS FIELDEN could not help feeling some alarm as she realised Old Roger's extreme weakness, and he seemed conscious of her anxiety on his account.

"Don't be frightened, Miss," he said, "I'm feeling better. I've been badly wantin' to speak to somebody, and I've kept putting off, because I didn't know the right person to trust. Besides, I wanted to make sure of one thing before I spoke. If *it* only came right I knew it would give me confidence to go to a certain gentleman and lay my case before him."

"Has it come right?" asked Norah.

"Not yet—at least, not as I know of. The post may bring the bit of good news I'm lookin' for any day now. Good news, when you're expectin' it, is always a long while on the road. It's the bad that comes by express train and is always in too soon."

"I suppose your news is sure to be good, if it comes at all."

"I think so, Miss, only there's more than one chance. It may be good, and yet might be better. Do you understand?"

"I think I do. You are pretty sure that something will happen to cheer and gratify you, but you are hoping for what would please you still better. The waiting time is always a trial to patience. But whilst you are waiting I should like to be helping. Tell me what I can do, and believe that I am willing to be your friend. You may trust me to keep your secret."

"Don't I know tha'?" said Roger, with an attempt at a smile. "The lady that would put herself about sooner than disappoint a poor body that was expecting to see her, wouldn't break her word if she promised not to tell anything she was asked to keep secret."

"I am glad to hear you say that. If this matter makes you anxious, it will do you good to know that somebody is sharing the weight with you. I always find that a trouble shrinks to half its size when I have told my father all about it."

"I believe you, Miss; but you see I've had nobody that I could trust. It's just wonderful that God has found a friend for me, all unexpected, when I'm so weak and worn out that I'm beginning to think I cannot last much longer. I mustn't die without tellin' and makin' a friend for that boy I told you about, if I can. I'm that tired—I never was so bad before."

Roger paused, and again Norah took out the little flask and glass, saying, "I only gave you half the proper dose of my medicine the last time. Now you must take the rest."

The old man obeyed, and Norah begged him to wait a little before beginning his story.

"What a sweet thought it is for us to call to mind that Jesus knew what it