

Sir John Bexley was not a very rich man; he had about £3,000 a year, some of it derived from investments, some from houses in Charteris Wells, the nearest town, and the rest from five farms, including the home farm at Charteris House, which he pretended to farm himself. So he had no house in town. Lady Bexley loathed London. She said it was immoral; perhaps it is. She also said that Jack must not live in an immoral place. She also said that London was not healthy enough for Jack. She said that Jack was really delicate. He had had an attack of bronchitis after the measles. This was scarcely any wonder, as he had got out of bed and out of window in the night to look after some tame rabbits. This was when he was twelve. Since then he had never had a cold, and he was forty-three inches around the chest. Lady Bexley loved to put a mustard plaster on that chest, and at times Jack indulged her motherly fancy. He loved her very sincerely, and he certainly knew he was not the stupidest person in the house. If he ever annoyed her seriously, as he did when he would not go to hear Mr. Vokes fall asleep over the Book of Common Prayer, and make others fall asleep when he preached, Jack used to be very kind.

"I think, mother, I should like to have a mustard plaster on to-night."