

and after standing for awhile, seemingly in a study, he suddenly left the workshop. The sons of Crooks Dan, and Ben appeared before the Squire, who, after soundly berating them, fined them moderately, but assured them that should they appear before them again, for a like offence, he should inflict the severest penalty. From this time all intercourse between the families was at an end.

In fact, the Crooks were rarely seen by any of their neighbours, but many surmises and conjectures were interchanged; still time passed and nothing unusual occurred, until one night as Mr. Purdee was returning home, rather late, he heard the munching of cattle in one of his fields where he knew they ought not to be, and could not have got, unless by man's agency.

Hurrying home for a lantern, the night being dark, he, with his sons, found the cows and sheep had been turned into the field and the gate shut upon them. This was the beginning of a series of annoyances, in one form or other, coming from a secret but suspected source.

"Spot," an old and valuable sheep-dog widely known, and esteemed, for his intelligence and unusual sagacity, came home dreadfully wounded; he could just crawl along to the brow of the hill, overlooking the house, where he was first noticed by one of Mr. Purdee's daughters. Poor Spot! He was carefully carried to the house, his wounds were bathed and dressed and after weeks of careful attention, he had so far recovered as to be able to walk around.

The farmers came for miles to see Spot, while he lay ill. Mr. Purdee, shook his head when enquiries were made; and the most he said was "they might have let Spot alone"; and so said everyone, who could sympathize with the patient dumb animal, which, with glistening eyes, watched the different members of the family and visitors, as though fully conscious of their thoughts as well as of their sympathy. Mr. Purdee waited as patiently as he could, for a solution of these attacks, from a concealed hand.

Walking out one evening in Autumn, with Spot along with him, they met Dan Crooks: from that evening Mr. Purdee

knew one enemy, and that one the wounder of Spot.

But this, the Purdees felt satisfied, would not be the last act of vindictive malice, and so it proved. The month of October was very stormy that year, and, on one of the roughest nights, the barns at the "Hall" were discovered on fire; the alarm bell was rung, and the servants, both male and female, did all they could but the destruction was complete. The "Squire" offered a large reward, but the criminals escaped detection; though suspicion pointed to the Crooks, and many recalled to mind, and repeated, the threats of both father and sons. None were more thoroughly satisfied of the guilt of the Crooks, than the Purdees; and this made them anxious, and unusually watchful, respecting both their property and personal safety.

The fifth of November was a dark windy night, and from the hills the bonfires in the villages, sending up their illuminations, could be seen, either directly or reflected in the sky, thus producing a singular combination of light and darkness, of brightness and gloom.

The firing of cannon, and the shouts of the boys, came up at intervals; and as Mr. Purdee stood watching and listening, his mind was much impressed with the scene; which not only recalled many such in which, when a youth he had been himself engaged, but the circumstances, and the particular event thus commemorated. The family went to bed somewhat later than usual, on account of the festive character of the night; and Mr. Purdee, after repeated attempts to calm his restless imagination, fell into a troubled sleep, in which Guy Fawkes, and Crooks his neighbour figured as the same individual; but as to this fact he was rather confused; with this was mixed up the stores of gunpowder and the burning of the Squire's barns. Next he was in court, and a trial was proceeding in which he was a witness, the officer was just on the point of putting him into the witness box, when he awakened with a start. The impression was so strong that he rubbed his eyes, and lay thinking; something scratched and pulled at the bed clothes, he put out his hand and found it was "Spot." This was so unusual an occurrence, for he had rarely