

leigh Ball's Road trying both to horses feet and coachmen's tempers through the winter, and also for the more convenient transit of milk, butter and cheese from the surrounding dairy farms to Dartminster and London. Briarly itself was little more than a handful of cottages clustered together near the station, the most prominent buildings being the Strangway's Arms, and "Ebenezer," the former regularly attended daily by the villagers, the latter only once a week, weather permitting.

The race week and the Dartminster assizes made business brisk at the railway station, but this year great excitement prevailed owing to a heavy fall of snow blocking the line and rendering it impassible for the night at least. The little platform was quite blocked up with portmanteaus and hampers, and cross, cold passengers. Stout Mrs. Blockett, the landlady of the Strangway's Arms, grew quite red in the face with the unwonted press of business, and declared it was the good old coaching days come back, as she settled about providing for the comfort of the travellers. Every conveyance in the place was despatched with more persistent travellers to Dartminster, while anxious friends kept the telegraph wires at work until good John Toms, the clerk, unaccustomed to such labours, was fairly worn out.

But presently the excitement subsided, the last heavily-laden conveyance had disappeared down the turnpike road, and a comfortable glow of firelight and atmosphere of hot supper pervaded the Strangway's Arms. Old Brice was just giving a last look round before

locking up and turning in for the night, when young Dale's attitude arrested his attention.

"Why, bless my heart!" was the emphatic result of old Brice's look over Dale's shoulder, and somehow the exclamation seemed appropriate for as old Price afterwards observed. "There was something about the youngster that seemed to go straight to your heart the minute you clapped eyes on him." At first nothing was visible in the carriage but a large bear skin rug, but a closer view revealed a little boy curled up in the corner with a rough brown dog in his arms, both fast asleep. Dale opened the door and lifted the little fellow out; while the dog, a great ungainly retriever puppy, bounced about with his great soft paws, poking a blunt nose anxiously round his young master.

"There! all right! Don't cry now, old chap!" Dale said consolingly, as a pair of blue eyes opened at last, dazzled by the lantern light, but gradually opening wider and peering curiously out from the rug.

There was still a bit of fire in the waiting room, and Brice stirred it into a blaze, while Dale deposited his bundle on the table and began carefully to unfold its contents—two short legs in leather gaiters, a little rough great coat, a seal skin hat drawn well down over rough yellow curls, a round baby face flushed and warm with sleep, and a ticket tied loosely round his neck, inscribed, "*To be left till called for.*"

The two porters surveyed him anxiously; old Brice scratched his head, and ejaculated, "Here's a go to be sure!" while Dale said