

grocery store in the evenings, because, they said, they were at the mercy of Phibbs, the package man, who brought their wares on his slow, creaking cart over the dusty turnpike from Mercer. But others, looking into the future, objected to a convenience which might result in a diminution of what little trade they had. Among the families, however, who did not have to consider "trade" there was great unanimity, though the Draytons murmured something about the increased value of the land; possibly not so much with a view to the welfare of Ashurst as because their property extended along the proposed line of the road.

The rector was very firm in his opinion. "Why," said he, mopping his forehead with his big silk handkerchief, "what do we want with a railroad? My grandfather never thought of such a thing, so I think I can get along without it, and it is a great deal better for the village not to have it."

It would have cut off one corner of his barn, and though this could not have interfered with the material or spiritual welfare of Ashurst, Dr. Howe's opinion never wavered. And the rector but expressed the feelings of the other "families," so that all Ashurst was conscious of relief when the projectors of the railroad went no further than to make a cut at one end of the Drayton pastures; and that was so long ago that now the earth, which had shown a ragged yellow wound across the soft greenness of the meadows, was sown by sweet clover and wild roses, and gave no sign of ever having been gashed by picks and shovels.

The Misses Woodhouse's little orchard of gnarled and wrinkled apple-trees came to the edge of the cut on one side, and then sloped down to the kitchen garden and back door of their old house, which in front was shut off from the road by a high brick wall, gray with lichens, and crumbling in places where the mortar had rotted under the creepers and ivy, which hung in heavy festoons over the coping. The tall iron gates had not been closed for years, and, rusting on their hinges, had pressed back against the inner wall, and were almost hidden by the tangle of vines, that were woven in and out of the bars, and waved about in the sunshine from their tops.

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