

Twice he had given the chapel preacher a bed on a rough night when it was almost dangerous to traverse the high, unsheltered coast road on his way back to Conway. And Hope provided the guest with an excellent supper, which he ate to the tune of Jonas's recollections of by-gone Cathedral services, and wonders that Mr. Price didn't get his people to make the chapel look a bit more like a place of worship.

'What are walls and material buildings?' put in Mr. Price at this crisis. 'It's the spirit that matters, Mr. Halliwell; church or barn, all is one to me.'

'Aye, aye, aye,' returned Jonas, 'but the outside dress does mean something, my friend, or you wouldn't be wearing your sleek black, as preacher, instead of the good rough frieze on my shelves.'

'Well, you see, as a minister of the Gospel, Mr. Halliwell, I'm bound to do honour to my profession in this poor way.'

Mr. Price looked down on rather a threadbare sleeve.

Jonas, however, hadn't done yet. 'And why don't you Chapel-people do honour to the Gospel by turning out something better than a barn or a good-sized dog-kennel to say your prayers in? What! bed-time already, Hope!' For Hope, with a sense of protecting hospitality towards the poor little preacher, had put a shining brass candlestick on the table. 'Now, sir!'

And the two men mounted the stairs, Hope smiling to hear her father carrying the argument right up to the front bedroom door.

Then she and Mari, the silent Welsh-woman, cleared the table, saw to the doors, and went to bed too.

Life at Abermawr now suited Hope exactly. She had plenty to do, real hard

work, too—the shop, the garden, and the poultry yard all falling to her share. Mari managed the kitchen, and Jonas rode into Conway most days. The Halliwells did not seek lodgers now, but very often the house was brightened by some merry little children and their nurse, some of Aunt Miriam's old stock of visitors, or by a delicate young Chester clergyman, who found Abermawr air reviving. Jonas immensely enjoyed these chance comers, and perhaps Hope felt the nearest approach to a spasm of jealousy, when she found her father one day with a sweet little ten-months-old lodger in his arms. He was singing to it in his cheery way, as Hope knew he used to do to his own little girls; but his eyes were glistening.

'It's got a look of little Charity, Hope,' he said.

'I don't see it,' she answered rather drily. Why was this strange child to stir her father's heart, of which she liked to have sole possession?

Hope didn't quite fancy the serious talks Jonas had, too, with the Rev. Mr. Allison, the delicate curate, but she did not interrupt them, although it vexed her to find that her father could be interested in subjects which she rather shunned.

Of course Mr. Allison, who was so often ill, must think of another world very often, but no need for her father, who, in spite of his years, was hale and well, to take up with fancies. Yes, Hope called them *fancies*, those eager stretchings out towards the great Beyond.

And yet, poor child, it was she who was contenting herself with what was unreal and misty, hugging to herself joys that must fade, a happiness that a breath of chill air might blast any moment.

(To be continued.)

