

"Farm labourer."

"Place of residence?"

"Clover Farm."

"Now, miss, please witness the signature of the new depositor."

Jessie did as required, and then was leaving the shop, when Mr. Timmins called after her—"Stay! stay! you've forgot something. You're going off without that there 'umming bird for your 'at."

Jessie coloured and came back, took up her white card box, containing the rainbow-plumaged bird that was to cork-screw hearts out of the bosoms of all the parish swains, and departed.

Tom was going out quickly after her when Mr. Timmins shouted, "Stay! stay! you've forgot something. There's them brandy-balls you've left on the counter."

"To be sure I have!" exclaimed Tom, and came back for the little twist.

"Ah!" said Mr. Timmins, when his shop was clear of customers, "I shall give up the post-office with the precious savings bank. It don't pay; I lost a penny over them brandy-balls. Nayles would have bought but that the girl repented of having took any; and I'll be bound 'f she'd had the savings bank book first I couldn't have got her to buy that there 'umming bird. And then I lost the price of half a pound of shag by that boy choosing to have a bank book instead. That ain't the worst of it. Saving is like drink; it grows on a party. It wouldn't be no good my laying in 'umming birds and 'baccy if all the gals went in for bank books and all the boys too. I'll give up the post-office and the savings bank; that spoils custom terrible—terrible—terrible! There ain't no call for pomps and vanities, and 'baccy, and pipes, and superfluities, when folks take to savings bank books. I'll give it up."

Jessie had not gone far before she found that Tom had quickened his steps and was at her side.

"Where are you going, Tom?" she asked.

"I'm going back to Clover Farm. And you?"

"Back to the Rectory. I've got the peas to shell for dinner."

"Then we both go one way."

"Well, I don't know; there's the private road."

"But you are not going that way?"

Jessie hesitated.

"One way is as long as the other," argued Tom, "and I'm terrible dull by myself. You'd better come my way,"

"I don't know," said Jessie; "I think I'll go by the private way."

"Then I'll go that way too."

"You can't, Tom."

"Oh! can't I? Just wait and see."

"I mean you mustn't; it is not a public road."

"I don't care."

"But I can't be walking with you on the private road as if I'd invited you to it; which I've no right to do."

"Then go with me the public way."

"If I can't help myself I must," said Jessie.

Presently they passed between high hedges full of red robin and bluebells.

"I say, Jessie, are you fond of brandy-balls?"

"Awful!" answered the girl.

"Then help me to eat mine."

"You bought them. Eat them yourself."

"I've a bad tooth. I can't take too much sweet stuff, or my tooth will ache. I wish you'd have half the lot."

"I couldn't do that."

"Well, sit down in the hedge with me, and we'll go on till my tooth begins to ache."

"I've got the peas to shell."

"Well, when is dinner?"

"In three or four hours."

"There's heaps of time for sucking brandy-balls; sit down and help me. If I eat too many my tooth will torment me all night. Do, please, save me that."

Tom leaned against the hedge, among the red robin. He opened the paper screw, took out a brandy-ball, and gave it to Jessie.

"Is it good?" he asked.

"Awful!" she replied.

"Then I'll have one," said he.

The two young people were silent for a minute, sucking brandy-balls. Every now and then they sighed. The delight was so exquisite.

Presently Jessie said: "Is your tooth jumping, Tom?"

"No, Jess. It is easy. Shall we have another?"

"I don't like to deprive you."

"Not at all. We will go on till my tooth begins."

"Tom," said Jessie, after an interval of a minute and a half, "what have you got in your book?"

"Look," said he, and extended his bank book to her.

"Two shillings! Oh my! I've only got one, and I might have had two but for the humming-bird."

"The what?" asked Tom.