

better days, fortunately. We had a talk in the garden before dinner, and after dinner a long talk, he and I alone.

"Your son is greatly changed, Lord Alwyne; in some respects completely changed. He looks at everything from a new point of view, and I can see that he has been thinking and studying during the whole of his two years' travel.

"All the old schemes are to be abandoned, and an entirely new plan adopted. I confess that at first I was amazed at his scheme, but I am beginning to believe that it is not only noble, but also feasible. It is, to put it in as few words as possible, this: There is to be no more lecturing and teaching. That, he says, is proved by experience to be useless. Any one can point the way like a sign-post; any one can stand on a hill and cry out to the people below to climb up if they can as he has done; any one can write books full of precious thoughts, if he have them himself; but you cannot always persuade people to read them. The lower classes, he says, all over the world are exactly alike, except in the United States. They will neither read, listen, nor see with understanding. They are slaves, not to laws, which touch them very little, but to habit and custom. The only way, therefore, to improve the masses, is to break down the slavery of habit."

When Lord Alwyne—he was reading this letter at breakfast—got as far as this, he put it down, and heaved a sigh.

"I asked her to bring him to common sense, and he has inoculated her. Habit and custom? And a very good thing for the people too. Let their customs be cleanly, their habits pleasant for other people, and their manners civil. What more does the boy want? Rigmarole."

"I am sure you will agree with Alan so far. In fact, all this is preliminary."

"Yes," said Lord Alwyne. "I knew that something more was coming."

"How then, asks Alan, is the task of substituting culture and inquiry for sluggish habit to be undertaken? There is, he says, but one way. By example. He will come down from his high place, descend to their level, work with them, eat with them, live with them, and endeavour to set the example of the higher life, and to show how that is possible, even with the surroundings of a cottage, and the pay of a farm labourer.

"Not what we give, but what we share:
For the gift without the giver is bare."

"The Devil!" This was the reader's interruption. "Now those two will go on fooling the rustics, till they make the whole country-side intolerable."

"I cannot say," continued Miranda in the letter, "how much I admire a man who gives himself. That is so much higher a thing—so much nobler—than to give money."

"If they had my money," said Lord Alwyne, "they might have me with it too for all I should care. Certainly I should not be of much use without it. Go on, my dear Miranda. It is pleasant talking over a breakfast table."

"It is like going out to fight for your country."

"Worse," murmured the reader. "Much worse. I've done that, and I ought to know. Except for the trenches, it wasn't bad fun. And at least one didn't live with rustics."

"Or it is giving up all that one has been accustomed to consider bare necessities: abandoning for a time the gentle life."

"I am glad it is only for a time. And I hope," said Lord Alwyne, "that it will be for a very short time."

"And it is certainly exposing one's self to the misrepresentation and ridicule of people who do not understand you; to unpopularity in the county——"

"Unpopularity indeed!" cried Lord Alwyne. "Now I hope to Heaven the boy will not meddle with the Game. Anything but that. And in such a county too!"

"And possible failure!"

"Ah! ha!" The reader laughed. "Possible failure! Ho! ho!"

"All these Alan will cheerfully face. He must have our support and sympathy, and we must wish him success.

"If you would like to hear more details of the plan——"

"I should not," said Lord Alwyne.

"Come down and stay with us. You might have Weyland Court all to yourself, and even sleep in the haunted room, if you prefer; but as Alan is entirely occupied with his plans, I think you would see little of him, and would be more comfortable with us."

"I most certainly should, my dear Miranda," said Lord Alwyne.

But he had to postpone his visit, because some one, who had a charming wife, who also