

According to their conception the greatest folly of the young Squire could be seen incorporated in a group of buildings situated just outside the village. Throughout the day could be heard the rattle of machinery, and the calls of busy men at work there. Towards this place the young Squire often rode on Black Bess, the best mare in the county, and the lads would touch their caps to him, while the lassies would curtsy their respects. His cheery greeting was ready for all, and he had always time to listen to their troubles and the desire to ease their burdens. They could not understand, and thus they hated his modern views, but they could not help loving and respecting him. Maggie Brown, who kept the post office, was never tired of singing his praises, for she had been nurse at the Hall when he was a "bonnie wee bairn." Of course she never approved of his opening the coal pit, any more than did her neighbors, and she felt her beloved Whitedale was disgraced when the mine was started.

But this sensation, like all others, lost its newness and novelty, and gradually they came to look upon the coal pit as a necessary evil. They were able to get their coal cheaper, and the Squire paid better wages for mining than he did for plowing. Work was also more regular than when they were "rained off" in their farming days, and these were convincing arguments to the poor.

Such then were the conditions at Whitedale when our story opens.

The particular day of which we write was a lovely Sabbath day in May. The sun was shining with all its glory, and the gentle breeze was laden with the perfume of the honeysuckle and the brier. To one who knew Whitedale it was evident that some event of unusual importance was taking place, and little groups of men and women were standing about, eagerly discussing the situation. The previous day something had gone wrong in the mine, and most of the men were laid off until the trouble could be removed. Master Percy and a gang of men were down there now examining the ventilation, and endeavoring to rectify the trouble.

It happened, however, that there was another cause for the unusual excitement provided this Sabbath day. They were deeply interested concerning the advent of the new parson into their midst. "Old Parson Black" had been with them for nigh half a century, but, owing to the infirmities of old age, had resigned some few weeks