

The club surgeon / [Charles Dickens].

Contributors

Dickens, Charles, 1812-1870.
Royal College of Surgeons of England

Publication/Creation

[London] : [Bradley & Evans], [1853]

Persistent URL

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"Familiar in their Mouths as *HOUSEHOLD WORDS*."—SHAKESPEARE.

HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 148.]

SATURDAY, JANUARY 22, 1853.

[PRICE 2d.]

THE CLUB SURGEON.

PALL MALL, your London street of palaces, does not contain my Club. I have incurred no risk of being pitched out of window at the Carlton Club. I have never dined at the Reform Club. My Club is in the provinces. No doubt it is a very poor affair; and I was a great blockhead to look forward, as I once did, to the day when I should be ballotted for by its members. I am surgeon to my Club. I receive from it half-yearly pence, and pay to it daily labour. Every one may have heard of the Army and Navy Club, the University Club, the Travellers' Club; but there are many, I dare say, who know nothing of the Country Surgeon's Club. Most surgeons and apothecaries in the country know of it, however, well enough. It is one of a strong suit of Clubs held by the provincial medical world; held very good-humouredly, although not rump, by men who are ever ready to put forth their skill, and play—indeed I must poise the parallel to say here—to work, and to work hard; for love as often as for money.

No idlers at a window in St. James's can lounge better than the members of my Club do, on a Monday. The members of my Club smoke often, and dine occasionally at their Club-house. They ballot for new members, they are particular about their rules, and enforce them by means of a committee. Most of the members dress strictly according to the fashion of the place in which they live, wearing, over their other clothes, a kind ofannel petticoat. We have a majority and a minority among the members of that particular specimen of the Country Surgeon's Club with which I am connected. The majority consists of colliers smutted with black who work every day (except Monday), the minority, of potters who work all day smutted white. But in the Club all members fraternise: the black man and the white are brothers.

Brothers all of us in a peculiar sense, and having brethren in all parts of England able to identify us by the mystic nature of our rasp; or, if more be necessary, by a few cabalistic words and signs, which we have sworn not to reveal to strangers; for my Club is a tout branch from the stem of the Ancient

Order of Woodmen, tracing our genealogy very far back through Robin Hood. Clubs of this kind are established, it is well known, as Friendly societies; and the member, in consideration of regular payments during health, is entitled to a weekly allowance during sickness, to gratuitous medical assistance, to a fixed allowance for funeral expenses, and to other advantages. Some of the largest Clubs are connected with societies bound, by a system of freemasonry, in fellowship with other bodies scattered through the country;—such as the Odd Fellows and Foresters, while others are purely local Benefit societies. Until the calculations upon which these bodies founded their schemes were put under the control of a Government actuary, they often caused, in spite of the best intentions, a great waste of the money of the poor. Attempting too much they became bankrupt just when their solvency was most essential;—when the young and healthy men who had joined them, having become old and infirm, required to draw relief out of the fund to which they had been contributing their savings, during perhaps twenty or thirty years. It is not my purpose here to discuss the principle of Clubs of this kind, and of Benefit societies. I am looking at my Club purely from the surgeon's point of view.

I was only beginning to get on in my district, doing the reasonable work of two men for seventy pounds a year, as parish surgeon, and filling up what leisure time I could make with odds and ends of private practice, and the work supplied by a few unimportant Clubs. The parish work required the help of an assistant; but, as the said assistant must be qualified, and as a qualified surgeon could not be lodged, fed, and salaried at a much smaller cost than seventy pounds, it was quite evident that I must ride, walk, sit up of nights, make pills, and spread blisters for my slice or two of bread-and-butter, hoping that by good deeds among the multitude of men who could not pay me, I might earn the confidence of some who could pay me. The name of a small tradesman likely to run up and able to pay a ten-pound bill in the twelve months was, at that time, one of the best glories of my day-book and ledger. To get the Woodman's Club was then my nearest hope. There was a chance for me: being the

last new comer I was very popular among the poor; and the miraculous recovery of a patient whom I had left to nature, and to whom I had administered water tinged with a little compound tincture of cardamoms, had created for me an enormous reputation in the immediate neighbourhood of some of the most influential of the Ancient Woodmen. Beerley—who was surgeon to the Club—had very often been re-elected in spite of a repeated half-yearly notice of dismissal, on account of various short-comings; but it appeared at length to be quite obstinately settled that his last half year of office had arrived. It was then clear to all the parish that the choice of a new surgeon would lie between me and my neighbour Parkinson.

To compare the teaching and the training which is of a kind to make the thoroughly well-educated medical man a genuine philosopher, with all the petty details of the life he has to lead in many thousand cases as a general practitioner, would be a very edifying task. Parkinson and I had terrible heart-burnings about that Club, the appointment to which involved attendance on a hundred and fifty men for the payment of four shillings a year from each. But then we reasoned, These men are in receipt of good pay; among the colliers are some charter-masters, and whoever pleases them attends, perhaps, their families who are not members of the Club, and against whom he may add up a bill. Besides, it is all—that indefinable mystery—connection. Therefore I quarrelled with Parkinson, because he canvassed among the Ancient Woodmen, insinuated himself into the hearts of colliers who had votes, and even courted some of them at the Thistle itself, which is the house at which my Club assembles, and there won the goodwill of the host—always an influential person—by joviality, and an affected love of beer. I thought this unprofessional, and I cut Parkinson; for I was myself a very Coriolanus in the way of canvassing.

Nevertheless, I was elected. The secretary of our branch of the Ancient Order of Woodmen, accompanied by a member or two, came to announce to me, in a dignified way, the cheering fact. I accepted office with none the less dignity, because I knew the messenger to have been one of my opponents. Parkinson attended the secretary's family, and if I were to behave too cordially towards the head of that family, it might be inferred that I desired to take away some part of Parkinson's practice. I desired very much that it should come to me, but had no right or wish to take it; therefore, I was in constant dread lest some good-humoured word or bit of cheerful gossip might, by some possibility, be interpreted into an attempt at theft.

Since it is necessary that the surgeon to the Woodmen should, himself, be initiated as a member of that ancient order, my first duty to my Club was to become a Woodman

on the next evening of meeting. On that evening I went down for the first time to my Club-house, the Thistle, a picturesque inn at the bottom of a hill road, overlooking a swift river. The evening turned out to be a black January night; and, as I sat by a dim light in the host's parlour, awaiting the moment of formal introduction to the assembled Woodmen upstairs; getting an occasional sight of the unfriendly face of the host, whose ale I was now, as in duty bound, for the first time tasting; and listening to the rush of the river outside, and the discordant blowing of Woodmen's horns upstairs, every now and then, at certain stages of the ceremony; I thought myself the loneliest of poor young country doctors.

At length a functionary with a Woodman's club in his hand, came for me, and ushered me upstairs to a door, before which stood another club-bearer, who beat upon it in a mystic way, who received answer mystically from within, and so procured admittance. Then I beheld my Club in its supremest glory. Its big horns, its mace, its badges, and its officers and members, looking powerfully grave, as I was set upon a wooden stool. The President then rose and read to me, as well as he could, a very long sermon indeed, out of a little book, concerning Woodmen from Adam and Eve downwards, and the duties and kind feelings by which Woodmen are bound together. I thought there was more than a spark of wholesome, human goodness at the bottom of it; but the absurd solemnity of the assembly, the pantomime properties represented by the colossal horns, and the amazing way in which the President pronounced all the hard words he came to, made it extremely difficult for me to fill the interesting situation in which I was placed without a display, before the court, of unbecoming levity. I repeated certain forms, was instructed in certain childish mysteries, and, kneeling on the footstool, repeated the formal vow not to reveal them to the uninitiate. Having done that, I paid a guinea, as the contribution of an honorary member.

The social business of the evening then commenced; the grave court resolved itself into an assembly of colliers and potters, who smoked pipes and drank beer in a spirit of good fellowship, and abounded in courtesy and politeness towards their newly-elected doctor. The great majority of working men are from their hearts truly courteous and polite. I wish to say something about this. I began practice as assistant in a purely agricultural district, employed by a practitioner of ample independent means. From the first day that I went there, very young and utterly unknown, every cottager touched his hat to me. Strangers who came on a visit to the place, if they wore good clothes, were greeted invariably with touched hats, bows, and curtsies. That is not courtesy, it is the mark of a degraded state of feeling

When I first went among the colliers, I got no signs of recognition until I had earned them. Better wages, and a little more to think about, have made our workmen in the north more independent than the southern agriculturists; but it is precisely because they are less servile that they are able to be more really courteous. Now that I have made my way here and am prosperous, many hat-touchings do indeed greet me—when, for example, walking against the stream, I meet our congregation coming out of church; but these greetings express a genuine respect. I have joined broken bones for the greeters, I have watched by their sick children, I have brought health to their wives, often receiving, and I may venture to say contented by, these kind looks for my main remuneration. The courtesy I get among these colliers is genuine; and, although they and their wives gossip like their betters, and make now and then a little cruel mischief, I have seen and know that simple kindly thoughts and impulses of the most genuine politeness prevail largely among them. Yet, they are perhaps the roughest and the least enlightened of the working men, except those who are employed in agriculture.

My Woodmen discoursed, therefore, in a courteous spirit; their officers discussed the few details upon which it concerned me to be informed, gave me the names of those who were then sick, together with a list of members of the Club, by which I might know what men were entitled to demand my services, in consideration of the four shillings a-piece paid yearly on their account. So, after drinking a little beer in token of good fellowship, I travelled home through a wet night, with thirty pounds a year added to my income, and the care of the health of a hundred and fifty men added to my work.

Not long afterwards I found myself in charge of a very large number of patients, for whom medical aid was procured through a Dispensary which paid to me three shillings for the whole attendance upon each case, including medicine. In this respect I was better off than many of my brethren who strive hard to obtain appointments to dispensaries that pay them nothing but the cheap accidental advantage of putting their names a little more before the local public. Other Clubs subjected themselves to my lancet, among them a large Church Club established by the rector in antagonism to the societies which led men into the way of waste by meeting at public-houses. Nevertheless, the number of my private patients increased slowly. At that time, after receiving patients in the surgery, and visiting in busy seasons as many as ninety sick people at their own homes, very often there were only three or four doubtfully profitable private entries for the day-book in the evening, and my poor heart rejoiced at any midnight knocking that might bid me give up my night's rest for a half-guinea fee. Very often indeed, however, the night-call

was to a Club patient, or parish or dispensary case. At that time, being unable to afford assistance, I was out, on an average, not less than three nights in a week; and as the average was very unequally distributed, sometimes the act of going to bed continued for a fortnight together to be a useless ceremony that could result only in pure aggravation. I would not record these experiences if they were matters purely personal; but there are thousands of my fellow-labourers who are, and have been, in the same predicament. If a stray Club patient whose case fell properly to the care of my neighbour, Parkinson, disturbed my broken rest, I sent him on to the right door and went to sleep again; if Parkinson were out, and he came back to tell me so, I went with him: but, if ever in such a case harm came of delay, the heartless apathy of the doctor—who did not care for the lives of Club or parish patients—was noised as the cause of all. If two urgent calls were simultaneous—as they would be sometimes—there was a certainty of getting heartily abused by somebody, and a chance perhaps of having one's professional and moral character bargained in a court of law. Every month I see some surgeon in the newspapers thus ill rewarded for the hard life he has led.

There is nobody to blame for all this, and there is nothing wanting but a little more discrimination on the part of the public, a little generosity in recognition of the work that country surgeons do. While families unable to bear the extra cost of sickness form a large part of the population, either one half of the people of this country must find their way to the grave without a doctor, or else the doctor must consent to spend a large part of his skill in labour that produces little or no money return. He does so spend it; as he thinks, in the fulfilment of a noble duty. Though among ignorant patients many things occur to vex him, he bears with them patiently, and if he comes with a sound heart to his work, he acquires faith in the poor.

"Love has he found in huts, where poor men lie;"

they become warm friends to him, and become lusty trumpeters to spread abroad the fame of skill that he has been glad to exercise among them. Our ill-paid work is done ungrudgingly, but after it is done we are a little galled when we are censured thoughtlessly for the neglects, which are inseparable from the performance of so huge a mass of urgent duty. It annoys us when we have patients able to pay becomingly for our assistance, who regard us rather as tradesmen than as gentlemen, require bills that contain long lists of pills and mixtures to be filed together with the joints of meat and groceries consumed by the establishment, and pay us with a secret feeling, half-expressed, that we have taken care to be well paid.

Why, then, do we overload ourselves with work? Why, for example, did I consent to

take the Woodman's Club? Because I wanted thirty pounds a year; because I wanted and liked work too, feeling pleasure—as only the dullest surgeons do not—in the active exercise of my profession, and because I hoped thereby to increase my knowledge, my power, and my connection. When I had a Dispensary and other Clubs added to the parish, why did I endeavour to do all that work single-handed? Because I had not at that time so much private practice as enabled me to pay the cost of an assistant. It is not pure labour that the country apothecary spends upon his parish and his Clubs. They oblige him to run up a heavy drug bill, to buy expensive instruments, and to keep a horse.

The drug bill of a young country surgeon who has parish work and Clubs, with very little private practice, easily reaches fifty pounds a year; and if he has no friend from whom to borrow instruments, the cost of them is serious. He must be prepared to meet every emergency and to perform any operation. He cannot send, as he would in London, for assistance from the hospitals; and though he may send for any surgeon in his neighbourhood by way of consultation, to advise with him, or take part in the responsibility of any obviously active measure, yet the performance of the active measure must be by himself. When he transfers the duty to a rival, he confesses his inferior ability, and transfers to the prompter man his patient's confidence. The country surgeon, if he would act for himself, and incur no risk of figuring unpleasantly at inquests, must have at hand every instrument which, like the stomach-pump, may be demanded suddenly, and must purchase others as they are called into request. If he has much poor practice, and nobody to borrow from during his first years, while he can least afford any expense, the call for one instrument after another will be tolerably brisk. In the first quarter of my attendance on the Ancient Woodmen, I spent all the quarter's money profit on an instrument required for the performance on a Club member of an operation not likely to be called for half-a-dozen times in a long course of practice. I had a broken leg two or three miles away in one direction, and a fever case requiring for some time daily attention two or three miles off in another. In addition to the cases of average slightness furnished by my Club, I was summoned to some dozen members who had nothing particularly the matter with them, and who only sent for their doctor on some trivial errand, because they had nothing to pay for his attendance.

All this time the followers of Parkinson were on the watch to register against me cases of neglect.

Of course they would and did occur; but as like cases were common to every surgeon in the parish, they were easily attributed to the general carelessness of medical men in their attendance upon the poor. They did

me no harm; but as Midsummer, and the great annual Club day and Club dinner drew near, I was warned that a hostile motion was on foot, that Beerleyites and Parkinsonites were forming a coalition, and that my ownites could not maintain me in my place if I did not wipe a certain stain out of my character.

That stain was Pride; inasmuch as the opposing faction, led by mine host of the Thistle, averred that it was very ungracious in me never to have come down to the monthly meetings to take my glass of beer with the assembled brethren. I was too proud to associate with working men. I was indeed spending my life among them and upon them, but the main point was the glass of beer. Besides, my pride was well enough known, for I had missed the annual dinner at another of my Clubs, and had put upon it the indignity of sending an apprentice, a mere boy, who could not carve a sausage. I was warned, therefore, by friendly Woodmen, that whatever I might think about the best employment of my time, if I did not go to the Woodman's dinner, I should in all probability get notice of dismissal from the Woodman's Club.

I revoked therefore my tacit intention to pay for the dinner, and abstain from eating it. True it is that the eating and smelling of a quantity of hot meat, and the breathing of tobacco smoke, in the middle of a hot working-day in July, can be considered only as a serious infliction; but I dared not trifle with my character. Already the growth of my private practice had been seriously retarded by my unprofessional conduct in not wearing a beaver hat. Subject to much physical fatigue, and liable to headache, I had found hats a source of torment, and wore therefore, in spite of much scandal, a light fur cap in winter, and in summer a straw hat, using Leghorn in deference to public notions of respectability. The want of a black hat retarded the growth of my private practice very seriously. A very lady-like individual, wife of a small grocer, Mrs. Evans, frequently declared that "she had heard me to be clever, and would have sent for me in her late illness, but she could not think of having a doctor come to her house in a cap, it was so very unusual." As I really could not give in on the hat question, it was a lucky day for me when I afterwards bethought myself of making up for the loose style of dress upon my head, by being very stiff about the neck. I took to the wearing of white neckcloths with the happiest effect. Everybody thought of the Church: I looked so good and correct in a clean white neckcloth, that I drew a tooth for Mrs. Evans in the second week of it. My practice rose steadily from that date, and in popularity I became a rival even to the rector. What I should have done, if I had effected a crisis by repenting of my fur and straw, and resolving to wear a good hat for the remainder of my days, and be at peace with all men, I don't know. Hats I continue to abominate.

But as I had not then thought of the white neckcloth, it was necessary that I should appease my Club public, at any rate, by dining jovially in their company. I therefore not only took a ticket for their feast; but replied to the dubious inquiries of the stewards by a hearty promise that I would be there, unless most urgent matters hindered me.

There was a grand procession in the morning through our little town, when Club day came. The Ancient Woodmen walked with banner, badge, and bugle under the hot sky, until one would suppose that they must have walked themselves out of all appetite for anything but liquid food. More urgent matters did not hinder me, and duly at half-past one I saw the food they came to; solid enough. My place was at the head of the table before a quarter of lamb; down the table there were joints of meat and dishes of ducks, a great many dishes of peas and a few dishes of potatoes. There was no bread used except by half-a-dozen of the hundred and twenty diners; the general sentiment being that the Ancient Woodmen could eat bread at home; that they had paid a certain number of shillings for their tickets, and were bound to eat the value of their money, which they could not comfortably take in bread. The same opinion operated against potatoes.

The colliers beat the potters hollow in the point of appetite. I have dined with City Companies, but even an alderman cannot handle a knife and fork in competition with a collier who is eating out the value of his dinner ticket, and endeavouring to secure a balance in his own favour, if possible. The actual manipulation of the knife may be more dexterous in aldermen; the colliers were sufficiently ungainly in the way of getting through their work, but the amount of work they did, it was a grand spectacle to see. Ducks were the favourite meat; they were carved, invariably, and eaten, after a plan that would have surprised nobody had they been partridges: each duck was cut by main force into two equal parts, being regarded only as sufficient to supply two plates. As for my quarter of lamb—I am remembering, and not imagining—when I had cut off the shoulder joint and held it lifted on the carving fork in the vain expectation that somebody would produce a dish in which to put it, a worthy collier regarding that joint as a tender slice which he should be sorry to see given to another, pushed up his plate, and paralysed me for a moment with the hungry exclamation—"I'll take that, if you please, sir."

So we began our dinner: how we went on, drank ale, and smoked, and sang, and how I had a speech to make and made it, how the Ancient Woodmen voted me a trump, how I retained and still retain the confidence of my Club, I need not go on to relate. It was my wish to make a little knowledge public that will help harsh critics of the country surgeon to more kindly and more just conclusions

than they sometimes draw from awkward premises. In a vague way men are ready to confess that we give much of our toil very generously for little or no pay, but they have only a dim notion of the small annoyances we bear, of the unjust complaints that vex us most when we endeavour most to do our best. They do not practically understand the right we have to generous consideration from the guardians of parishes and managers of charitable funds, and to respect and cordiality from those who are alone able to make worldly amends to us for the petty vexations and the very considerable sacrifices to which we cheerfully submit.

MISS HARRINGTON'S PREDICTION.

"JANET, I tell you again, you will rue this foolish marriage. You are only preparing a life of misery for yourself; and you will repent too late that you did not follow my advice."

Janet, between laughing and crying, shook her head, and twisted her apron-strings, as waiting-maids do on the stage. Then seeing that her mistress expected her to answer, she said, "But ma'am, he loves me so much that I cannot be unhappy! He will be kind and steady, and how can I be miserable then?"

"He loves me so much!"—how many women, Janet, that delusion has led to their ruin! What an absurdity! The only answer a silly girl can give, when warned of her folly, is, "Oh, but he loves me so much!" And on this fickle fancy of an unprincipled man—all men are unprincipled, Janet—she expects to find her happiness for life!

"I know, ma'am, that you are against us girls in service marrying," answered Janet, gently. "I have heard you say so often, and how silly you think us for giving up a comfortable home for all the misery women get in marriage. And yet, ma'am, if you love a person, you would rather live in a hole in the ground with them, than in the Queen's palace without."

Miss Harrington frowned. She was a severe lady of the "nature repression" school; and she thought her waiting-maid's speech neither so womanly nor so modest as it ought to have been.

"I don't approve of women loving so very furiously," she said, with a sharp accent in her voice. "There are bounds of propriety even to the love of a wife; and as for an unmarried woman, Janet, whether engaged or not, she ought never to allow herself such an expression as you have made use of just now. It is not at all proper, nor what I approve of."

Janet's great hazel eyes looked down under their eye-lashes at this. She was a simple girl, and could not understand aesthetics. Her Rule of Right was contained in a very few broad touches, and Miss Harrington's metaphysical ethics were always lost on her.

"Well, go away now, Janet," she said, rather peevishly; "and if you have any common sense left, remember my warning. I tell you that this marriage with Robert Maylin will make you the most miserable woman in existence. He is a worthless fellow"—Janet pouted, and gave her head the slightest possible inclination of a toss—"and he will get tired of you before the year is out. And when he has spent all your money, for he is marrying you for nothing else"—Miss Janet pursed up a very pretty pair of lips: "something better than that," she thought—"and when he has drunk away all your income, he will get cross to you, and perhaps beat you, and then leave you on the parish. This is the history of nine-tenths of you young fools who marry for love, as you call it. And, who knows?—you *may* have some little children; the thing is not impossible; but if you have, what will you do when you cannot give them bread? Think of that!—a squalling starving family about you! Go along, you foolish girl. I am provoked with your obstinacy. To prefer that good-for-nothing fellow, and all his wicked ways to a comfortable home and an indulgent mistress—it is really too bad! And how I am to be suited when you leave me, I'm sure I don't in the world know. But you girls are so ungrateful, it is of no use to be kind to you. As soon as you have got into our little ways, and begin to understand us, you leave us without gratitude or remorse, and we have all the trouble of teaching a new servant over again. There, go along—do; try if you cannot spend half an hour in the day usefully; and go and trim my blue cap, and do it better than you did last time. I won't have Robert Maylin's love in my work; and I am sure since you have been mad after that fellow you have done nothing well, and scarcely done anything at all."

And Miss Harrington, drawing her easy-chair closer to the fire, adjusted her spectacles, and began on the police sheet of the Times; feeling that she had disburdened her conscience, and performed her duty to society.

Janet shut the drawing-room door, thoughtfully: not because she believed implicitly in all the forebodings of her mistress; but they struck on her sadly somehow, and she wished they had not been said. But Robert Maylin, to whom she told a little—not all—that had passed, called Miss Harrington "a stupid old muff," and told Janet so often that she was a fool to listen to her, that at last Janet believed him, and said, "Yes, she was a fool," too.

And then he swore eternal love for the hundredth time that week; and looked so handsome while he did so, that Janet, gazing at him with a kind of wondering spell-bound admiration, thought there was more truth in one of his smiles, and more worth in one of his words, than in all Miss Harrington's fancies and frets put together.

"I am sure you will always be kind to me, Robert," she said, suddenly, laying her hand on his shoulder, and looking at him in her guileless way, right into his eyes.

She was a pretty girl, our Janet, with an open, truthful forehead, and a loving smile; and Robert thought he had never seen her look so pretty as now.

"Kind, Janet? Am I a man and could I be anything else but kind to any woman in the world—still less to one I loved? I could not lift my hand against a woman, if you paid me for it. I am not one of those brutes who kick and cuff you about like dogs.—Kind! no woman ever found me unkind yet. I love them all too well for that—though, perhaps, a precious sight of you have found me too much the contrary," he added, with a slight laugh below his breath. Janet did not hear this last clause; which, perhaps, was quite as well, as matters stood.

Janet was comforted, credulous, and convinced. She knew nothing of a young girl lying pale in her shroud in a certain churchyard, because Robert Maylin had first loved and then deserted her. She had never heard either of Mary Williams, the wife of young John Williams, the baker, who took to drinking about a year after she had known Robert Maylin to hide her love and remorse together, and who had been willing to leave her three little ones, if he would have taken her off with him as he offered. She was ignorant of the history of the pretty housemaid in Berkeley Square, where Robert was footman, who had lost her situation—and more too—for love of that handsome villain; and who had been afterwards taken up near Waterloo Bridge, mad with despair and destitution. People did say he had stolen her savings as well, though she was so infatuated with him she would not prosecute him; and only cried like one distraught when he left her to the workhouse or to the streets. She knew nothing of the life he had led since he left home, a bold and beautiful boy of fifteen, to seek his fortune in the world; and treated as slanders the faint rumours every now and then flying about, of the curse he had been to every pretty woman who had taken his fancy. She believed in his worth, because she loved him for his good looks; and she made, as all women do, the hero of her heart the model of her morality also.

The wedding-day came at last. Miss Harrington, who had been dignified and illused, sulky and snappish by turns, gave the dinner—from charity she said—gave the wedding clothes, because country girls have no notion of propriety, and she did not choose her old servant to disgrace her house; and she gave two-thirds of the furniture—"only to keep the poor wretch from the workhouse at first; she will be sure to go there in the end."

"It is not because I approve of the match, or like the man," she said. "I do neither; it is only from the merest charity that I give